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THE

C O M M E N T A R Y

ON THE

(ON AN ORIGINAL PLAN)

With Critical and Explanatory Notes, Indices, etc., etc.

BY

VARIOUS AUTHORS.



RICHARD D. DICKINSON, FARRINGDON STREET.

1890.

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ON THE BOOKS OF

BY

REV. JAMES WOLFENDALE.



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HOMILETIC COMMENTARY

ON

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE two Books of Chronicles, like the Books of Kings, formed originally one, and were divided, as in the English Bible, by translators of the Septuagint. The division was adopted in the Latin Vulgate by Jerome, whence it passed into various branches of the Western Church. In Hebrew the title is *Dib-rey hay-yamim*, meaning "The acts of the days" (*acta not verba dierum*), a title applied to accounts which historians wrote of kings. A daily record, a sort of "Court Journal," was usual at Oriental palaces (see Esth. ii. 23; vi. 1; x. 2), cf. *Speak. Com.* The Books record the leading incidents of the times. The term *chronicon* was suggested by Jerome, as equivalent to the Hebrew title; and this in the plural form, *chronica* or *chronicorum liber*, was adopted in some editions of the Vulgate, whence the English translators took it.

The Author. Ascribed to Ezra generally. Its close connection with the book of Ezra is very apparent. "The same spirit breathes through both, and numerous little expressions, identical or nearly so in the two works, indicate almost certainly the same hand. The curious fact, moreover, that the one Book ends and the other begins with the same passage, suggests the same author, and probably indicates that originally the two books were united and formed but one work, which it was afterwards thought better to divide into two" (*Speak. Com.*).

The Date. Internal evidence proves that Chronicles were written after the Captivity. This opinion is supported by the *orthography* and the nature of the *language* employed, both of which are Aramæan in complexion, and harmonise with books written after the exile. "If Ezra was the author, the date could not be much later than B.C. 435, for Ezra probably died about that time. There is nothing in the contents or style of the work to make the date B.C. 450-435 improbable; for the genealogy in ch. iii. 23, 24, which appears to be later than this, may be a subsequent addition" (*Speak. Com.*).

The Style. The work is one, a record of annals, a supplement of former historic books. The Septuagint designates the work *Paraleipomena*, things left out or unnoticed. We have repetitions of Samuel and Kings, and important supplements to fill up earlier narratives. A high value is set upon "Levitical spirit," that is, regard to externals in religion. Its history has been termed

"ecclesiastical," that of Samuel and Kings "political." In the mind of the writer the religious establishment is of primary, the State of secondary importance (cf. *Speak. Com.*). "There are three principal features—(a) a greater tendency to dwell on the ritual, on the details of the Temple worship, the various functions of the Priests and Levites, the arrangement of the courses and the like; (b) a marked genealogical bias, and desire to record names of persons engaged in events narrated; (c) a more constant, open, and direct ascription of all the events of history to Divine agency, and especially a more plain reference of every great calamity or deliverance to the good or evil deeds of the monarch, or the nation, which Divine Providence so punished or rewarded (cf. *Speak. Com.*).

The Object. It is historical, yet the writer seems to forget former histories and gives his own. First to give an entire history from the very beginning to meet the difficulties of the time—to preserve true genealogies of families—and since future prosperity depends upon the preservation of the Temple with its priests and service, he begins with David, describes Solomon's acts, and then follows out the history of Judah (not of Israel), and shows how kings maintained its worship or introduced idolatry, and were rewarded or punished according to their conduct. "It is thus apparent that the object of Ezra in writing the Books of Chronicles was to place before the Jews such an aspect of their past history as would show them that from the peculiar constitution of their government as a Theocracy, the glories and decadence even of the Davidic monarchy were most closely associated with the recognition of the Lord's presence by a faithful maintenance of the worship which he had ordained for that purpose. Such a view of their history was calculated to strengthen the religious element of their nationality, to teach them that their highest glory was the special sovereignty of God over them, and that although that sovereignty was exceptionally exercised through prophets, its natural and ordinary manifestation was to be found in association with the Levitical system" [*J. H. Blunt*].

The Analysis. Naturally divided into four parts. Part I. a series of genealogies or a summary of ancient history of man in the line of Israel to David. 1 Chr. i.–ix. Ch. i. from Adam to Israel; chs. ii.–vii. the twelve tribes of Israel; chs. viii.–ix. the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Part II. contains the history of David's reign from the death of Saul, partly agreeing with the account in the Books of Samuel, yet with important additions concerning the Levites, chs. x.–xxix. Part III., in nine chapters, comprises the reign of Solomon, 2 Chr. i.–ix. Part IV. gives a history of the kingdom of *Judah* (while *Israel* remained, x.–xxviii.; and after *Israel's* downfall), especially in connection with the worship of God, xxix.–xxxvi. The account continues to the proclamation of Cyrus authorising the return of the people and the rebuilding of the Temple. "There are twenty whole chapters and twenty-four parts of chapters occupied with matter not to be found in other books of Scripture. These books, therefore, are highly important on account of the new material as well as the new aspect of things which they present."—See *Murphy*, *The Books of Chronicles* (Clark).

"And these are ancient things" (1 Chr. iv. 22).

CHAPTER I.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The writer gives no explanation or introduction, presumes upon the knowledge of the reader, and simply enumerates names from Creation to the Flood, contained in Gen. v. The Deluge, 1,656 years from the creation of Adam.

Vers. 1-4.—These names embrace Gen. i.-ix., which the reader is presumed to know. This furnishes a principle of interpretation to other parts of the book. The Hebrew pointing will often account for the orthography of the names.

Vers. 5-7.—*List of sons and grandsons of Japheth* (cf. Gen. x., Noah's sons in order of Genesis x. 1). Beginning with *Japheth*, youngest, to dispose of what is not exactly required, the writer gives seven sons—three through *Gomer*, the eldest son, and four through *Javan*, the fourth son.

Vers. 8-16.—*Descendants of Ham*, sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. Four sons of *Ham*; six grandsons, including *Nimrod*, through *Cush*, the eldest son of *Ham*; seven grandsons through *Mizraim*, second son of *Ham*; two great-grandsons through *Raamah*, *Cush's* fourth son; 30 altogether.

Vers. 17-27.—*Shem's descendants to Abraham*. A pause half way at the name of *Peleg*, ver. 19, to mention *Joktan*, his brother, and then *Joktan's* thirteen sons, vers. 20-23. Then repeating the first five names of lineal descent, and picking up the thread at *Peleg*, the remaining five to *Abraham* are given—Gen. xi.-xvii.—given as briefly as possible. *Abraham* the tenth from *Noah*, and twentieth from *Adam*.

Vers. 28-33.—*The collaterals of Isaac*. This reaches from Gen. xvi.-xxv. *Isaac* put first as child of promise, though born fourteen years after *Ishmael* (Gen. xvii. 25 and xxi. 5). So *Shem* put first, though second son. This must be kept in mind in examination of lists. From call of *Abraham* to birth of *Isaac*, thirty years. Vers. 29-31 taken from Gen. xxv. 12-16. *Their generations*, a new starting-point, modified from Gen. xxv. 12, to include *Isaac* as well as *Ishmael*. Vers. 32, 33 abridged from Gen. xxv. 1-4. The sons of *Edam* omitted (*Murphy*).

Vers. 34-37.—*Descendants of Esau* (cf. Gen. xxxvi. 10-14). *Timna*, ver. 36, seems to have been concubine of *Eliphaz* and *Amalek*, another son by her. Ver. 37, four grandsons of *Esau* by *Reuel*.

Vers. 38-42.—*Descendants of Seir*. *Seir* probably a *Shemite*, though his relation is unrecorded (cf. *Murphy*). Twenty-seven names given agree with Gen. xxxvi. 20-27, except for *Homam*, *Alian*, *Shephi*, *Auram*, and *Jakan* we have *Hemam*, *Alvan*, *Shepho*, *Hemdan*, and *Akan*.

Vers. 43-50.—*The Kings of Edom* (cf. Gen. xxxvi. 31-43). *Before any king*, before *Israel* had any civil government, or became a nation with a king. There are eight names, the parentage or the land of each given.

Vers. 51-54.—*The Dukes of Edom*. Eleven given. Some think a list of places, not of persons, compared with Gen. xxxvi. 15, 41, 43. This ch. contains genealogies which embrace about 2,300 years. Not a remark given apparently, moral, religious, or didactic. It connects *Israel* with *Adam*, and retraces the pedigree of men to its original source.

HOMILETICS.

THREE PAGES OF HUMAN HISTORY.—Ver. 1.

Names are potent things, represent mighty factors, sustaining forces in life, and important periods in history. We are apt to think genealogies are dry, and names of no significance, but Scripture nomenclature reads a different lesson. How suggestive the names in ver. 1!

I. The creation of man. *Adam* first and representative of the race. The historic man, apparently no "prehistoric man." The creation of man a decree and last work of God, the crowning point of all. In man, and through man, nature finds its purpose and transformation. **II. The inspiration of hope.** *Seth* means *fixed*, *settled*, or compensation. He came in the place of *Abel* taken away. At birth of *Cain*, *Eve* hasty in joy (*I have gotten the man*); in *Abel* (*vanity*, *perishable*) desponding; in *Seth* confident. Divine

power compensated for what human cruelty took away, inspired hope of permanent blessing. God can wonderfully comfort. If one gone, He can give another. He can strengthen, establish, and perpetuate the family and the Church, so that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against them." **III. The beginning of public worship.** *Enos* designates weakness, human frailty, a sorrowful remembrance of Abel (Ps. viii. 5; xc. 3). How soon are hopes dashed! But God becomes great when we feel small. "Then began men to call upon (proclaim, announce) Jehovah" (Gen. iv. 26). A new line of promise in Enoch (*Enos*) after line of Cain had lost it. Hope finds expression in formal worship. The Sethites merge into a community, outline a church, and publicly honour Jehovah. In a new race and a believing generation God's name ever presented with higher glory and greater attractions.

SOLEMN VIEWS OF HUMAN LIFE.—*Verses 1-4.*

I. The beginning of human life. In Adam a distinct beginning of humanity on earth, not as a physical act merely or completion of physical progress. It happened in the supernatural and spiritual. "Not merely *formation, animation*, but direct, divine *inspiration*" (Gen. ii. 7) [*Taylor Lewis*]. From the first man spring all the race. History and science cannot present the contrary. "The first man was made a living soul." **II. The length of human life.** Before the Flood men long-lived (*cf.* Gen. v.). Accounted for 1. *By natural causes.* Habits simple, food nutritious, and climate healthy. 2. *By providential design.* To establish institutions, people the earth, and propagate truth. **III. The corruption of human life.** The Cainites, ungodly—first civilisation worldly, art and culture misused, polygamy prevails, races intermix, unbelief and Titanic pride corrupt the race. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5). **IV. The destruction of human life.** Evil contagious, rapidly spread and deteriorated the race. They were *flesh*, wholly carnal or animal. "He also is flesh" (Gen. vi. 3). In wanton deeds, divine warnings despised, the Holy Spirit grieved. The world ripe for judgment. God repented, that is, changed his procedure, not his purpose, concerning man (Gen. vi. 7, 8). The Flood swept "every living thing from off the earth." **V. The deliverance of human life.** A few were saved (1 Pet. iii. 20). Noah and his family preserved, and were progenitors of a redeemed race. God held human life sacred, bound himself by signs never more to destroy it by flood. Noah, the last of Sethic race and first in the line of Shem, a second ancestor of the human family. Man rises to a higher place in the world. As a believer he is saved from general wreck, inherits a new earth purged from sin, and becomes heir of a righteousness by faith.

THE HUMAN RACE, IN ITS UNITY, PROGRESS, AND DECLENSION.—*Verses 1-54.*

Glancing at these names, what an insight into human life, human activity and circumstances!

I. The unity of the race. The race not merely represented but comprehended in Adam. "Made of one (blood) all nations of men" (Acts xvii. 26). Mankind not "a living sand-heap," without generic connection. The Bible sees in Adam "the power of a single life—men one before they became many; and as many, still one." One natural "fatherhood," and one "common brotherhood" in him. "One touch of nature makes the world kin." **II. The progress of the race.** Every movement implies beginning, progress, and consummation. This makes history. 1. *In knowledge.* Not from barbarism at

first, but from supernatural light shining directly or indirectly on human steps. 2. *In arts.* Lamech's three sons authors of inventions (Gen. iv. 20-23). Culture and science as old as humanity. Barbarism and brutality result from corrupt civilisation. 3. *In civil government.* Cities built, states founded, kingdoms formed, titles given, and rulers chosen. 4. *In population.* Beginning from a single pair, in seven generations the human family attained considerable increase. "If Abraham's stock, in less than 400 years, amounted to 600,000, Cain's posterity, in the like time, might arise to the like multitude" [Willlet]. It should remind of the reality and power of God's blessing (Gen. i. 28). 5. *In religion.* Abel's piety revived in the godly Sethites. "While the family of Cainites, by the erection of a city and the invention and development of worldly arts and business, were laying the foundation for the kingdom of this world, the family of the Sethites began, by united invocation of the name of the God of grace, to found and erect the kingdom of God" [Delitzsch]. Separation from ungodly associates needful. This, with social worship, checks declension and secures advancement. **III. The declension of the race.** Before the Flood, licentiousness and violence, pride and self-gratification. This 1. *Seen in sinful works.* Nothing wrong to build cities, handle harps, and cultivate poetry and music. These intended for the benefit of men, and should be consecrated to the service of God. But sadly misapplied when they lead to pride and forgetfulness of God. 2. *Seen in ungodly lives.* Cain, the murderer; Lamech, the polygamist; Nimrod, the powerful tyrant (Gen. x. 8). "The earth was filled with violence." 3. *Seen in significant names.* Qualities, principles, and characteristics seen in names of Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Lamech, &c. (Gen. iv. 23-26). Adah and Zillah indicative of sensual attractions. Learn the danger of intellect and civilisation separated from religion, the downward progress of sin, and the necessity, in these days of science and mechanical invention, of steadfastly fearing God and maintaining public worship.

"Grieved at his heart when, looking down, he saw
The whole earth filled with violence" [Milton].

POSTERITY OF NOAH'S SONS.—Verses 5-23.

I. The enemies of the Church. 1. Sons of *Japhet* (vers. 5-7 and Gen. x. 2-5). Trace the wide world-wandering, in which future generations disappear from the theocratic line. 2. Sons of *Ham* (vers. 8-16). Hamite culture early, corrupt and mixed with Cainite elements. **II. Allies of the Church** (vers. 17-23). In the line of Shem we have the gravitation of humanity to its centre, the gradual preparation for the calling of Abraham, and for the Messianic descent. Shem's history, the last in the world, first in the kingdom of God.

THE MIGHTY HUNTER.—Verse 10.

In the formal register of Gen. x. 8-12, a brief account of an individual inserted. A fact of importance, because it concerned the Hebrews to know that though their own ancestors came from the region where Nimrod played so conspicuous a part, the great kingdom, afterwards known as Babylon, was of Cushite, not of Semitic origin [Dr. Dods]. 1. *His descent.* Cush begat Nimrod. He is put back before the time of Abraham and assigned to the Ethiopian race. 2. *His occupation.* "He was a mighty hunter." Hunting of ravenous beasts a benevolent act for the human race. Powerful huntsmen pioneers of civilisation, as in the myth of Hercules. Nimrod, successful, became a great man, conqueror, and ruler. 3. *His extensive empire* (Gen. x. 10-12). As a mighty hunter, he founded a powerful kingdom. The founding of the kingdom is shown to have been the consequence or result of his strength in

hunting, so that the hunting was most intimately connected with the establishment of the kingdom. Figuratively, he was "a hunter of men" ("a trapper of men by stratagem and force," *Horder*), and became a tyrant and oppressor of liberty (cf. *Keil*, Gen. x. 9). 4. *His great fame*. Recognised as mighty; became a proverb, "It is said," &c. Expression *before the Lord* added as if God himself must take note of his skill. Some think that blame is intended, that his notoriety for boldness and wickedness is expressed; something so bad that God could not take his eyes from it. Learn the responsibility of power. Check the tendency to do homage to greatness which takes the form of "hero-worship." Wisely use and not abuse the endowments entrusted to your care.

"O execrable son, so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not given" [*Milton*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Genealogies and their use. 1. In helping Jews to identify their tribes. After return from captivity, all confusion. In prospect of future, needful to revise and reconstruct. 2. In illustrating Jewish History. Here and there names of great importance, and significant of solemn crises of history. 3. In tracing the descent of the Messiah.

Vers. 1, 4, 28. *Three covenants*—Adam, Noah, and Abraham. *Double names*—*Abraham*, the natural and spiritual name; *Jacob*, supplanter and prince.

Ver. 10. *Nimrod's threefold position*. 1. As the pioneer of civilisation; 2. As oppressor of patriarchal liberties; 3. As the instrument of God for the development of the world [*Lange*].

Ver. 19. *Peleg, or Division of the earth*. Its time, method, design, and commemoration (Gen. x. 25).

Vers. 24-27 (Gen. xi.). Other nations shaken off—line from Shem to Abraham given here. 1. *Ishmaelites* (vers. 29-31): 12 sons = 12 princes (Gen. xvii. 20). 2. *Midianites*, children of Keturah (vers. 32, 33). 3. *Edom-*

ites (vers. 36-54, cf. Gen. xxxvi.): (a) Kings of Edom (vers. 43-50); (b) Dukes of Edom (vers. 51-54).

Ver. 47. *Hudal dead* (cf. ver. 43). Notice 1. Changes in earthly governments—"reigned and died." 2. Uncertainty of human life: (a) In life's circumstances, "reigned"; (b) In life's end, "died."

Vers. 1-54. In list we find: 1. Progenitors of a new race. 2. Founders of great nations. Napoleon vowed that he would found a family, though not himself, of great lineage. *Many famous men*: Adam, the first man; Methuselah, the oldest; Lamech, polygamist, musician, and poet; Enoch, Noah, Nimrod, Abraham, &c. *Great events*: Creation of man: invention of arts; translation of Enoch; flood of Noah; call of Abraham, &c. *Suggested subjects*: "The Antiquity of Man"; The Origin of Civilisation; The Division of Nations; The Unity of the Race; The Foundation of the Israelitish People.

"For human weal, Heaven husbands all events" [*Young*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1. These chronicles have a mission. As no star was useless in the heavens, and as every atom has been created for a purpose, so God would not devote these chapters to

a pedigree without design. The end is Christ.

Ver. 1. *Adam*. Every human being is a volume worthy to be studied, and I thank God that my own lot is bound

up with that of the human race [*Channing*]. No man can think too highly of his nature, or too meanly of himself [*Young*].

Vers. 5-18. Threefold division of nations according to the names Japheth, Ham, and Shem. For part played by the several races in civilisation, cf. Fairbairn's *Studies in Phil. of Religion*, and Noah's prophecy (Gen. ix. 25-27). "All these sons, the white posterity of Japheth, the yellow and dark sons of Ham, however they may live in temporal separation, are all still God's children, and brothers to one another."

Ver. 27. *Abram*. The tenth from Noah, and the twentieth from Adam. The letter H, which was added to the original name of the patriarch, occurs twice in the sacred name of Jehovah. It was added, also, to the name of

Sarai. The addition in each case seems to mark a new and closer relation to God. "And I will write upon him the name of my God" [*J. H. Blunt*] (Gen. xvii. 5). The sacramental character of a name consists in its divine appointment to represent and commemorate and testify some special grace and blessing, and so to be a permanent pledge of its bestowal. Wilkinson, *Personal Names*, &c.

Vers. 44, 45. *Bela dead, Jobab reigned in his stead*. A great hand is sometimes laid even on the fly-wheel of life's engine [*George Macdonald*].

"What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!
Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
destroys them" [*Cowper*].

CHAPTER II.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The sons of Israel. Names more numerous than Genesis, without regard to order. Greater interest by filling up former accounts.

Vers. 3-12.—*Posterity of Judah*. Vers. 1, 2, sons of Leah first; sons of Rachel between Dan and Naphtali (cf. Gen. xxix.-xxxv.). Vers. 3-8, Judah first, pre-eminent (Gen. xlix. 8), and descendants given to third generation. Vers. 3, 4, abridged from Gen. xxxviii. and ver. 5 found in Gen. xlv. Vers. 6-8, descendants of Zerah, Zimri, Zabdi in Josh. vii. 1; the other four given 1 Kings iv. 31; called "sons of Mahol," or "sons of music." *Achar* (*Achan*, Josh. vii. 1), "troubler." Ver. 10, *Ram*, first as ancestor of David. Line given in Ruth iv 18-22. "The five names from *Salma* to David cover a period of at least 450 years from the Exodus to the birth of Solomon."

Vers. 13-15.—*Sons of Jesse*. Three eldest (1 Sam. xvi. 6-9); next three here only. Some think Raddai is Rei (1 Kings i. 8).

Vers. 18-20.—In remainder of this ch. the writer obtains scarcely any assistance from the earlier Scriptures, and must have drawn almost entirely from genealogical sources, accessible to him, which have since perished (*Speak. Com.*). *Caleb*, son of H. (ver. 18), to distinguish him from other Calebs in ch. *Hur*, companion of Aaron (Gen. xvii. 12). *Bezaleel*, famous artificer (Ex. xxxi. 2).

Vers. 21-24.—Resumed reference to *Hezron*. *Jair*, son of Manasseh (Num. xxxii. 41), belonged to Judah by father's side, yet attached himself to the house of Machir. His wife an heiress, and her inheritance was to follow her tribe (cf. Num. xxvii. and xxxvii.), cf. *Murphy*. He pushed his conquests far and wide (Deut. iii. 14).

Vers. 25-41.—A second interruption in account of Caleb's posterity. Descendants of Jerahmeel, vers. 25-27. Vers. 28-33, sons of Onan to seventh generation in line of Shammai, to fourth in Jada.

Vers. 42-49.—*Offspring of Caleb resumed*, probably of Jerioth, a different mother, ver. 18. Two concubines of Caleb introduced, ver. 46-49. *Ephai's* sons unknown. Second concubine mother of four or five sons and a daughter.

Vers. 50-55.—A little difficulty in these verses. Some maintain only one Caleb, and others that there were several (cf. *Speak. Com.*). Ver. 55, *scribes*, civil or ecclesiastical officers of Kenite origin, classed with Judah, not as descendants, but dwelling in its territory, intermixed through kindly feeling and incorporated with them (Ex. xviii. 10-19;

Num. x. 29-32; 1 Sam. xv. 6). *Rechab*, ver. 55, father or progenitor of the Rechabites who retained to late date nomadic habits of Kenite ancestors (cf. Jer. xxxv. 10; 2 Kings x. 15).

HOMILETICS.

THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS.—*Verses 1, 2.*

This is a most important register of Israel, who should dwell alone and not be reckoned among nations. Notice—**I. The six sons of Leah**—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun (Gen. xxix. 32-35). Learn—1. *God's grace in Leah's fruitfulness*. Leah loved less than Rachel (Deut. xxi. 15). God works above human thoughts, neither to compensate Leah for lack of Jacob's love, nor to punish Jacob for sinful partiality; but to manifest sovereign power, to teach that children are a heritage from him, and to indicate his purpose in fixing the line of promise, not by the fruit of nature, but the gift of grace. 2. *Leah's gratitude expressed in names of her sons*—Reuben, behold a son; Simeon, hearing; Levi, joined; Judah, praise. "God hath endued me with a good dowry" (Gen. xxx. 20). **II. The two sons of Rachel**—Joseph and Benjamin. 1. *In Joseph renewed faith*; reproach taken away, an expression of spiritual life and dependence, not on human device (mandrakes), but on God for offspring and help. 2. *In Joseph revived hope*. "He shall add" another son (Gen. xxx. 24). Grateful for one, she expects God will give another. Experience of divine faithfulness a great help in looking to the future. "Experience (worketh) hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." The wish was realised, but she died in Benjamin's birth. The fulfilment of our wishes may be dangerous and fatal.

A FAMILY HISTORY.—*Verses 3-12.*

In this record of Judah, as in all families, a record bright and cheering, dark and disgraceful.

I. A record of family shame. Some were wicked, guilty of abominable crimes. 1. *Sin ending with untimely death*. Er's wickedness great, a special sin in Israel's descendants, a defiance of God and his word to make them a numerous nation. Onan refused to raise up children in his brother's name. An indication of his envious disposition and vile pollution of body. Both displeased the Lord, and were cut off by untimely death. Many, it is feared, act in the same way—dishonour body and destroy soul (Gen. xxxviii. 8-10). 2. *Sin connected with shame*. Tamar guilty of incest (Gen. xxxviii. 16-18). 3. *Sin bringing trouble*. "Achar the troubler of Israel." "He transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and wrought folly (trouble) in Israel" (Jos. vii. 15). In *Israel*, in the Church, and among the people of God, with God's presence to provide for them and protect them! guilty of theft, sacrilege, and invading the rights of God, by converting for private use what is designed for his glory. Achan, branded with disgrace, a monument of judgment, and a perpetual warning. These sins were early, unnatural, and grievous. Yet Thamar received a place in the Toledoth of Christ (Mat. i. 3), and the "valley of Achor" becomes "a door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15). **II. A record of family honour.** The potentiality of families great. Children become saints or scourges, joys or sorrows. 1. *Some greatly distinguished in position*. Ram, an ancestor of David (Ruth iv. 18-22); Nahshon, a prince in Judah, and led the van during encampment of Israel in wilderness; Salma was in post of honour when they entered Canaan. 2. *Others excelled in mental qualities*. Varied gifts of body and mind in members of the same family. (a) *Eminent in wisdom*—Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, the glory of their father's house. For when Scripture magnifies the wisdom of Solomon, he is declared to be wiser

than these four men (1 Kings iv. 30). When Joseph was in authority they dwelt in Egypt, cultivated natural talents, distinguished for social wisdom and fine arts, and became eminent among the sons of Egypt and the East. (b) *Skilled in music.* The family of Zerah, or Ezrah, said to be sons of Machol, or the choir (1 Chr. xv. 17-19). Psalm lxxxviii. is ascribed to Heman the Ezrahite, and Psalm lxxxix. to Ethan the Ezrahite. Hence they were choristers, skilled in music and its kindred arts—poetry, singing, and dancing. These qualities cultivated in tribe of Judah, and attained highest lustre in David and Solomon. Thus families have their sunshine and their shame, their glory and decline, their troublers and comforters. Secure your name in the record of heaven, that when the page of history fades, your title may never expire.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Pre-eminence.* *Reuben*, natural firstborn; *Levi*, legal firstborn; *Judah*, Messianic firstborn. "The names of Jacob's sons a type of human weakness and divine salvation in his house" [*Lange*].

Ver. 3. *Er* and *Onan*. One acted "wicked in the sight of the Lord," another "displeased the Lord." Both the same in perverting a natural ordinance, militating against purity and development of the theocratic family, and deserving Divine reprobation.

Ver. 4. *Tamar*. Guilty of temptation, practised deception, and committed incest. These events in Judah's family display the goodness and severity of God, illustrative of grace and judgment. "Why did God and the

Holy Ghost permit these shameful things to be written? *Answer*: 1. That no one should be self-righteous. 2. That none should despair on account of sin. 3. To remind us that Gentiles, by natural right, are mother, brothers, sisters of our Lord" [*Luther*, in *Lange*, Gen. xxviii.].

Ver. 6. *Sons of Zerah.* *A famous choir.* Influence of music in the family and the Christian Church. "The music of the spheres" [*Shakespeare*].

Ver. 7. *Achor*, the transgressor and troubler. The connection of sin with trouble. Trouble leadeth to discovery of sin. Sin ending in death of individuals and punishment of community. "That man perished not alone in his iniquity" (Jos. xxii. 20).

HOMILETICS.

THE FAMILY OF JESSE.—Verses 13-15.

"A special account kept of this family for the sake of David and the Son of David, a rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. xi. 1)." Several principles illustrated in history of this family.

I. The mistakes of human judgment. A family of imposing persons—Eliab, majestic in appearance; Abinadab and Shammah, great in physical power and brave in battle (1 Sam. xvii. 13). "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." No! look not on the beauty of countenance and the height of stature, &c. **II. The law of divine choice.** David chosen. Weak things to confound mighty; cripples to overcome giants, and shepherds to rule men. Unlikely men to the front. God takes out of range of appearances, pays no regard to human prejudice. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Learn that human judgment is not infallible. God's choice is best; submit to it, and seek its proof in its spiritual gifts and results.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CALEB.—Verses 18-24, 42-49.

In the list we find—

I. Persons of note. *Hur*, the companion of Aaron, who rendered help to Moses and to Israel on the mount (Ex. xvii. 20); *Bezaleel*, the famous artificer of the Tabernacle, grandson of Hur (Ex. xxxi. 2); *Jair*, the taker of cities, to which he gave his name (Num. xxxii. 41): threescore cities (towns or livings) fell before his valour (Jos. xiii. 30). *Hezron* himself was eminent, one of the seventy that went down to Egypt with Jacob (Gen. xli. 12). **II. Illustrative incidents.** Events displaying God in history and God in the family. 1. *In human families.* One childless (ver. 30); another no sons (ver. 34). Intermarriage in vers. 34, 35. Perhaps the Egyptian was upright and wise, and became a proselyte to the Jewish religion. 2. *In human history.* *Ephrath* (ver. 19), named after her who gave the name to the town Ephrath, which is Jerusalem. "We begin here to learn the interesting and unexpected fact that the intercourse of Israel with the localities in Palestine, where their ancestors had acquired property, was kept up so long as they were a free and honoured people" [*Murphy*]. *Machir* is called "father of Gilead" (ver. 21), who was born before death of Joseph (Gen. i. 23). "Gilead, memorable in history of Jacob and the scene transacted there remembered by Joseph, an observant youth at the time of the parting covenant between Laban and Jacob. If Jacob established any title to the mount at that time, this would be an additional reason for calling a son of Machir after this celebrated spot" [*Murphy*]. Thus we learn that God can make the obscurest eminent, and smallest service memorable. He presides over the destinies of families and the relationships of life. We can trace Divine impress upon records of history.

OFFSPRING OF CALEB CONTINUED.—Verses 50-55.

Since Hur was the son, not the father, of Caleb, a difficulty presented here. Best way to read "sons" for "son" before the word Hur. All difficulty will disappear, and we shall have the sense. "These (the list in verses 42-49) were the sons of Caleb. The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrath, were Shobal... Salma... Hareph." The clause "these were the sons of Caleb" corresponds exactly to that which concludes the genealogy of Jerahmeel (ver. 32), and properly belongs to what has gone before, not to what follows [*Speak. Com.*]. In the list we discover—

I. The company of colonisers. Fathers, first settlers of places. Shobal, Salma, Hareph; the four families mentioned in ver. 53, who left parents and residence (Kirjath-jearim) to colonise towns and villages in neighbourhood from which sprang Zorah and Esh-taol. **II. The family of scribes** (ver. 55). A trio of civil or ecclesiastical officers, the heads of whom were *Tirah*, *Shimea*, and *Suchah*, of Kenite origin, dwelling in Judah, but distinguished from another Kenite clan which dwelt in Manasseh (Judg. iv. 11). **III. The famous Rechabites** (ver. 55). Not only famous for nomadic habits of their ancestors (2 Kings x. 15), but for honourable connection with the ancient Abrahamic tribe of the Kenites to which the father-in-law of Moses belonged (Judg. i. 16; 1 Sam. xv. 6, xxvii. 10). Their descendants were men of character and influence, and highly commended by God (Jer. xxxv. 18, 19).

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 13-15. *The story of Boaz.* character of Jesse, as indicated by the Prominent in the Book of Ruth. *The incident of the text.*

Ver. 19. *Bezabael*, art consecrated to God. *Jair*, prowess and valour employed in advancing the cause of God.

Ver. 24. *Hezron was dead*. A suggestive hint, a solemn reminder, in pursuits of life and conquests of nations that earthly possessions cannot be kept.

"And that small model of the barren earth, Which serves as paste and cover to our bones" [*Shakespeare*].
"Nothing can we call our own, but Death."

Ver. 55. *Scribes*. A class devoted to exposition of law, instruction of the nation, and preservation of its records

1. *A noble calling*. To study and expound sacred books, intone society, and spread the will of God. 2. *A family calling*. "The families of the scribes." Hereditary pursuits in all communities. Advantageous to fix traditions and habits in persons, to pursue studies in cities, colleges, and schools. 3. *A needful calling*. The revelation of God, written and printed, requires study, application, and circulation. A literary profession useful to society; a learned ministry the want of the times. "Writing is now the mightiest instrument on earth" [*Channing*]. "The families of the scribes. These were the public notaries, or, as some think, text-men, who took the literal interpretation, as

distinct from Wise, that is, teachers of traditions, and from Disputers, that is, teachers of allegories and mysteries (see 1 Cor. i. 20; Jer. viii. 9; Ezra vii. 6). The first were the best of the three, and of these were the Rechabites, who being Shuchathites, that is, dwellers in tents, might dwell where they pleased, and now dwelt at Jabez, a place which seemeth to have its name from that good Jabez of Judah, who prayed so hard (*cf.* iv. 10), having haply the help of these holy Kenites, the posterity of Jethro (see Judg. i. 16)." [*Trapp*].

Vers. 18-55. I. What multitudes unknown! Men with names and nothing more. They live, die, and are buried in oblivion! So we think. But what do we know of history? Best men, quiet service, and patient endurance gain no record. II. But men unknown and most obscure may be honoured. "Nobodies" become "notabilities," and through divine grace introduce Christ to man and bless the world. "There will be a resurrection of names some day," says Ruskin.

"Whose silent prayers and labours Heaven employs
To do the good, whilst others make the noise" [*Jane Taylor*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1-13. *Sons of Israel, sons of Judah, &c.* "The child is truly and literally 'the heir of all the ages.' The past, with all its legacies, has existed for it, just as all the future will be its own. To whatsoever heights of human excellence it may rise, or to whatsoever depths of human degradation it may sink, the child is now an element in the sum of human life; a new unit in the aggregate of mankind. It is therefore worthy both of study and reverence. Did we but form an adequate conception of the dignity and also the marvellousness of human existence, the oldest man might well stand bareheaded and thoughtful in the presence of a babe" [*Anon.*]. (Luther's schoolmaster taking his hat off to his pupils.)

Vers. 19 and 24. *Was dead*.

"How he marks his way
With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine!
Art, genius, fortune, elevated power!
With various lustres these light up the world,
Which Death puts out, and darkens human race" [*Young*].

Vers. 18-55. Live for something. Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name by kindness, love, and mercy on the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your name, your deeds will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind as the stars on the brow of evening. They shall shine as brightly on earth as stars of heaven [*Dr. Chalmers*].

CHAPTER III.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Having completed list of descendants of Jerahmeel and Caleb writer returns to ch. ii. 15, gives line of David, royal house of tribe of Judah, to the Captivity and afterwards. Many difficulties in names and order cannot be touched here.

Vers. 1-9.—Sons of David. First, those born in Hebron. *Daniel*, Chileab (2 Sam. iii. 3). *Reigned*, ver. 4 (2 Sam. ii. 11, v. 5; 1 Kings ii. 11). Second, those born in Jerusalem, vers. 5-9. *Shimea*, Shammuah; *Bathshua*, Bathsheba; *Ammiel*, Eliam, letters merely transposed. *Concubines*.—Ver. 9 (2 Sam. xv. 16), "One daughter (*Tamar*) mentioned according to rule, that daughters are given only when the line is saved, or that they had for special reasons made a place for themselves in history" [*Murphy*].

Vers. 10-16.—Descent to Captivity. First, as far as King Josiah, vers. 10-14. *Abia*, or Abijah, for Abijam (1 Kings xv. 1). *Azariah* ("help of Jah"), called Uzziah ("strength of Jah") in 2 Kings xv. 30, immediately after death, and so named elsewhere (2 Chr. xxvi. 1; 2 Kings xiv. 21). Four successions follow sons of Josiah, vers. 15, 16. *Jeconiah*, ver. 16. *Coniah* in Jer. xxii. 24, and Jehoiachin in Kings, meaning "Jehovah will establish."

Vers. 17-24.—Descent to Exile and afterwards. This text is difficult and disarranged apparently. The following arrangement is given by Dr. Davidson (*Hermeneutics*): "V. 17. And the sons of Jeconiah the captive; Salathiel (asked of God) (Shealtiel, Ezra iii. 2; Neh. xii. 1; Hag. i. 12, 14; ii. 2) his son: v. 18. And the sons of Salathiel; Zerubbabel (sown, *i.e.*, begotten, in Babylon—who was the direct son of Pedaiah; but omitting several intermediate links, is called the son of Salathiel, Mat. i. 12) and Shimei (renowned): and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam (friend, *i.e.*, of God), Hananiah (graciously given of God), and Shelomith (pacifie), their sister. V. 19. And Hashubah (esteemed), and Ohel, and Berechiah (blessed of Jehovah), and Hasadiah (beloved of God), Jushab-hezed (whose love is returned). 20. And Malechiram, and Rephaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 21. The sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah and Jesaiah: the sons of Rephaiah; his son Arnan, his son Obadiah (worshipper of Jehovah), his son Shecaniah (dwelling with Jehovah)."

Ver. 22.—*Shemaiah*, or Shimei (ver. 19, *cf.* Zech. xiii. 13). *Mattush* probably accompanied Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra viii. 2).

HOMILETICS.

THE SONS OF DAVID.—*Verses 1-10.*

I. Their places of birth. The verses classified according to the place of birth. In *Hebron*, six sons born, each of a different mother. In *Jerusalem*, thirteen, four of one mother and nine of others not mentioned. Places often identified with birth of important persons. Bunyan and Bedford, &c. Let character and conduct give renown to place. **II. Their varied lives.** *Absalom*, son of a king's daughter, a murderer and rebel, "died a fool." *Amnon* violated his sister *Tamar*, and was slain. *Adonijah* conspired against the throne, and met with bitter disappointment. *Nathan* reminded his father of the prophet who reproved his sin, brought him to repentance, and had the honour of belonging to the ancestry of Jesus (Lu. iii. 31). *Solomon*, wisest, most gifted, and successor. But what checkered lives! Little to give parental joy. Much to cause anxiety and grief. Amid the splendour of his reign and the power of his palace, his cup was mixed with grief and sorrow, &c. "Trust not thou in their (children's) life, neither respect their multitude: for one that is just is better than a thousand; and better it is to die without children, than to have them that are ungodly" (Ecclus. xvi. 3).

"Virtue, not pedigree, stamps nobility."

THE GOLDEN AGE.—Verses 10–16.

David's successors given up to the Captivity. For convenience call it the golden age.

I. The description of the period. 1. *A long period.* "Seldom has a crown gone in direct line from father to son for seventeen descents together as here"—say Henry. Judah survived Kingdom of Israel by 135 years, and lasted from B.C. 975 to B.C. 586. 2. *A prosperous period.* In population, resources, and empire Judah great; soil fertile; aristocracy hereditary in sacerdotal caste; an army always subordinate; a venerated centre of worship and administration; on the whole, peaceful and uninterrupted success of kings. In language, literature, and religion a glorious period. **II. The nature of individual reigns.** Peaceful and warlike; powerful and weak; long and short. Kings-wise and foolish; godly and idolatrous; reigned by natural right and fixed on throne by foreign potentates. The first part began in splendour, the latter ended in desolation. In David and Solomon we pass from conflict to peace; in Jeconiah and Zedekiah from grief to exile.

"This strange, sad world is but our Father's school;
All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule"

[F. R. Havergal].

THE DECAYING GLORY.—Verses 17–24.

In these verses we have the royal remnant during captivity. The decaying glory.

I. The dark beginning. Jeconiah adopted Salathiel, otherwise written childless, the signet God plucked from his hand, dear as an ornament, yet rejected (Jer. xxii. 24). There is a striking contrast between this beautiful name (*Jehoiakin*, Jehovah will establish) and the miserable fate of the man. Enthroned by Necho, powerless against Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem was besieged, Jeconiah taken prisoner, bound in fetters and carried to Babylon (2 Chr. xxxvi. 6, 7).

II. The gradual decay. Zerubbabel the last with any shred of authority. After him royal line disappears into obscure private life. Nehemiah next governor of whom we read. Sennacherib repulsed, religious revivals under Hezekiah and Josiah, but the impious reign of Manasseh and the lingering decay of the people under the four feeble descendants of Josiah prepared for the final ruin. Babylon in successive deportations drained away their strength. The temple was destroyed amid wailing of prophets; the nation ceased amid taunts of heathen tribes, released from the yoke of David. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly destroyed."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1–24. Review the list.
1. *Indicative of God's providential discipline.* In bestowing mercy upon bad men, fulfilling his word to good men, and unfolding his purpose in wonderful events to all ages. 2. *Indicative of vicissitudes in human life.* In joy and grief, in splendours of the palace and the obscurity of exile. Revolutions in time and place. Change everywhere. "There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to

come with those that shall come hereafter" (Ecc. i. 11). 3. *Indicative of vanity of worldly fame.* The humorist Thackeray asks, "What boots it whether it be Westminster or a little country spire which covers your ashes; or if a few days sooner or later the world forgets you?"

"Thus are we fortune's pastimes; one day live
Advanced to heaven by the people's breath,
The next, hurled down into th' abyss of death" [May].

Vers. 10-16. Sketch the lives of David and Solomon, Hezekiah's reign, Manasseh's wickedness, and Josiah's piety.

Ver. 19. *Zerubbabel*. 1. *Distinguished in work*. (a) Leading a liberated people to their own land. (b) Rebuilding the Temple. (c) Instituting civil government. 2. *Distinguished in the prosecution of that work*. Courage, patience, faith, and enthusiasm. A personal example and a power among his people. 3. *Distinguished as the object of prophecy*. Often addressed by name by

Haggai and Zechariah; received glorious predictions concerning temple he was building and future magnificence of Jerusalem and Judah, which exercised great influence upon his mind and preserved a spirit which endured till the coming of Christ. *A name suggestive of important events*. 1. Return of captives. 2. Restoration of national government. 3. Establishment of religious worship. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house," &c. (Zech. iv. 9).

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1-24. *Sons of*, &c. It was, perhaps, ordained by Providence, to hinder us from tyrannising over one another, that no individual should be of such importance as to cause, by his retirement or death, any chasm in the world [*Dr. Johnson*].

"Men die and are forgotten. The great world

Goes on the same. Among the myriads
Of men that live, or have lived, or shall
live,
What is a single life, or thine, or mine,
That we should think all nature would
stand still
If we were gone?
The great are not great to me unless they
are good" [*S. Richardson*].

CHAPTER IV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Obscurity often arising from brevity conspicuous in this passage. Yet we discern an order in it, indicated in first verse. It contains descendants of Shobal, Hur, Carmi, Hezron, and of Pharez. The section chiefly of local interest, intended to point out founders of some of the towns in the province of Judah [*Murphy*]. *Reaiah* conjectured to be same as Haroeh, ii. 52. 3, 4. *Descendants of Hur*. *Father*, i.e., joint founders of Etam, a town on rocky hills of Judah (Judg. xv. 8; 2 Chr. xi. 6). *Gedor*, now Jedur (Jos. xv. 58). *Hushah*, of unknown site, but indication of the place (2 Sam. xxiii. 7; 1 Chr. xi. 29).

Vers. 5-10.—*Descendants of Ashur* (Carmi), posthumous son of Hezron by Abia, called *father* or chief of Tekoa; with two wives, three children to one, and four to the other. *Jabez*, ver. 9, son or maternal kinsman of Ashur, who names the town (ii. 55).

Vers. 11-15.—*Descendants of Hezron*. *Chelub*, brother of Shuah, to distinguish him from others. The group in vers. 11, 12, unknown. 13-15 return to names not quite strange. *Even* (and) *Kenaz*, ver. 15, translate as marg. *Ukuaz*, or suppose a name (*Jehalcel*) to have fallen out after Elah.

Vers. 16-20.—*Descendants of Pharez*. From vers. 17, 18, difficult to come to any conclusions. *And these*, an interesting phrase, indicative of sojourn of these persons in Egypt, when Israel was free, prosperous, and respected. "It was then as becoming for a sovereign of Egypt to give a daughter in marriage to Mered, as at a later period a sister-in-law to Hadaad. This Pharaoh may have been the last of the dynasty that preceded the eighteenth" [cf. *Murphy*].

Vers. 21-23.—*Descendants of Judah*. We have been ascending from Shobal to Hur, to Carmi, to Hezron, to Pharez; now we rise to Judah himself. A list of descendants of his son Shelah here given [cf. *Murphy*]. Lincn, a staple commodity of Egypt. Ashbea, a

descendant of Shelah, had a factory there. Ver. 23, last of Judah, and leave the tribe in obscurity. Some of these potters, and others gardeners.

Vers. 24-43.—*The sons of Simeon.* Classed with Judah, because possessions partly in their territory (Jos. xix. 1). Differences of particulars in list occasioned by some having more than one name (*cf.* Gen. xlv. 10; Ex. vi. 15, and Num. xxvi. 12, 13). Ver. 27, *Shimei* distinguished from his brethren by a large family. "Progeny of Simeon here traced to settlement in Canaan." Vers. 28-33, *His territory.* Eighteen cities given in Jos. xix. 2-7. Changes in name took place in time between Joshua and David. Vers. 34-38, *Subsequent increase* of certain families of Simeon; *princes*, ver. 38. "The number of names is thirteen, corresponding to number of cities in first list (vers. 28-31), so that it may be suspected that the princes mentioned were registered chiefs of those cities in time of Hezekiah (see ver. 41)" [*Speak. Com.*]. Vers. 39, 40, the first migration. *Valley* into which mountain streams ran to fertilise the land, suitable for Simeonites, quiet and peaceable on account of seclusion and long undisturbed inhabitants. *Ham*, ver. 40, on their way to Africa induced by fertility of soil and abundance of water. Vers. 41-43, *further migrations.* *Days of Hez.*, hence date of Simeonite expedition, before captivity of ten tribes (2 Kings xviii. 8). *Rest*, ver. 43, remnant left by Saul's great slaughter (1 Sam. xv. 7, 8), and by David (2 Sam. viii. 12).

HOMILETICS.

THE CHIEFS OF JUDAH.—Verses 1-23.

Judah the most famous and most important of all tribes. A tribe which survived other tribes, and whose register was specially cared for. **I. Posterity of Shobal** (vers. 1-4). From these came the Zorathites (ch. ii. 53). **II. Posterity of Ashur** (vers. 5-10). Ashur, posthumous son of Hezron (ch. ii. 24), whose mother was probably a daughter of Carmi. If so, he is grandson of Carmi, hence introduction of this name in ver. 1. **III. Posterity of Chelub** (vers. 11-20). Men of Rechah as inhabitants of an unknown place of that name. **IV. Posterity of Shelah** (vers. 21-23). Shelah, son of Judah, a family ingenious and industrious above others. Honest labourers are the salt of society; the healthy, luxurious and dissolute, the idle and predatory would corrupt it. 1. *Craftsmen* (ver. 14). A wise arrangement that men should be fitted for different employments. 2. *Weavers* (ver. 21). This an ancient and skilful labour. Children excelled and became famous in their business. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good." 3. *Rulers in Moab* (ver. 22). Entrusted with power for many generations. But this long ago ("ancient things"). A great change. Fathers had dominion then, posterity in servitude now! 4. *Potters*, and 5. *Gardeners* (ver. 23). "With the king," on the king's property; or preferring to stay with him in Babylon rather than return to their own country. "Unworthy the name of Israelites are those who dwell among *plants* and *hedges* rather than go to Canaan."

JABEZ THE HONOURED NAME.—Verse 9.

This a strange description in a catalogue of names. The man worthy of remembrance, an honoured name deserving attention. **I. The circumstances of his birth.** Born in sorrow. 1. *Sorrow the lot of all* (Gen. iii. 16). Man born to sorrow as sparks fly upward (Job xiv. 1). 2. This, perhaps, *special sorrow*, which the mother wished to perpetuate in name. O. T. names significant of qualities and circumstances of life. Benjamin (Ben-oni), son of my sorrow, by Rachael; son of my right hand, by the father.

"I do beseech you,
Chiefly that I might set it on my prayers,
What is your name?" [*Shakespeare*].

II. The dignity of his character. "More honourable." Not a title of position or office as "The Hon." and "The Right Hon.," &c. 1. *Honourable in himself*, literally "a man of weight." Jews say, a famous doctor of the law who had disciples and founded a city which took his name (ch. ii. 55). But honourable and upright in personal character and conduct. A man of prayer and fervent piety, whose name is held in everlasting remembrance. 2. *More honourable than others*. Some think he was exalted above them as judge, signalised in war, or gained larger estates than his brethren. Not richer in material wealth, but in moral worth; more dignified in private life, more distinguished in action and public philanthropy. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." Seek this honour of character and life, not worldly honour which decays like a flower, but honour from God, perpetual and true.

THE REMARKABLE PRAYER.—Verse 10.

Many things deserving attention, which make it a model of thoughtful, earnest, and successful prayer. **I. Its spiritual characteristics.** Devotion an expression of spirit, not lips. 1. *Its view of God*. Right views of God essential. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is," &c. Not *Jehovah*, the Almighty, Self-existent, and Eternal; but *God of Israel*, the covenant God who keeps his word and never forgets his people. 2. *Its humble tone*, a kind of vow. If thou wilt bless me, thou shalt have my heart and service (Jacob. Gen. xxviii. 20), but without thee undone, &c. 3. *Its earnest spirit*. "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed." Language of ardent feeling and intense desire, becoming and needful. "O God, let me not fall from earnestness. Grant me to hate every false way," cried Thomas Chalmers. **II. Its worthy object.** Most personal and direct, straight as an arrow to the point. 1. *For personal blessing*. "Bless me indeed." This the beginning, the most needful of all. 2. *For successful undertaking*. "Enlarge my coast." Expulsion of Canaanites, or special effort in which he desired to succeed. All success from God. Pray when you enter life, start business, begin some fresh pursuit, take a journey, or enter a new residence. 3. *For preservation from danger*. "Thine hand with me." His undertaking risky. He wanted something beside reputation, shields, and soldiers. Wealth, friendship, and human aid, nothing without God. "Uphold me with thy right hand." 4. *For deliverance from evil*. Evil of *sorrow* implied in his name. Deeply impressed with his mother's conduct. Let it not be. Desired to be joy and help to parents, not a grief. Evil of *sin* generally. In remembrance of Achan, perhaps. Sin ever brings sorrow, "keep me from evil." Deliver me from its guilt and consequences. "Let sin have no dominion over me." **III. Its gracious answer.** "God granted him that which he requested." God preserved in danger, gave success in enterprise, delivered from grief and sin, and exalted him to honour and position. This to magnify his grace, encourage piety and prayer.

"In all thou dost, first let thy prayers ascend,
And to the gods thy labours first commend;
From them implore success, and hope
A prosperous end." [W. Fleming].

JABEZ THE "HONOURABLE."

According to a worldly standard, this list includes more hon. names than that of Jabez. But in the estimation of heaven, the only reputation that will live must have connection with God. The words we specially emphasise are, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast!" Some analogies suggested by the sea-coast may teach the following lessons. **I. An enlarged**

“coast” suggests an expanded horizon. Carnal sympathies and lack of faith limit to narrow visions of divine truths and holy revelations. Our spiritual relations determine whether soul vision commands outlook from a small bay, or toward broad ocean. To the mother of Jabez his entrance into the world was associated with some special suffering, and she named him “sorrowful.” Years rolled on, God by his prophet knighted him and pronounced him “more honourable than his brethren.” Even so now according to our faith will be the significance of our individual history. Let our vision be bounded by time and sense only, and life will be a baptism of grief. Let faith widen our coast, expand our horizon, and all along the coast the lamps of “hope” shall hang, and a “more honourable” name be gained than those who refuse the “faith, which is the substance of things not seen, and by which the elders obtained a good report.”

II. An enlarged “coast” suggests a broader surface. The glory of a coast is its wide sweep of the ocean. There go ships, whose massive keels skim the surface of the waters. There floods lift up their voice, whose swelling waves declare the fulness of its strength. Such in figure is the human soul when possessed and enlarged by the Spirit of God. What sublime possibilities of divine enlargement belong to the heart of man! Sin circumscribes, hems in, and we are “straitened in ourselves.” But the coast may be enlarged; hills of difficulty be removed, and mountains of unbelief levelled, until an expanded horizon sheds calm and enlivening radiance all around, and the renewed soul takes up the language of a renewed earth (Is. lx. 4, 5).

III. An enlarged “coast” suggests a more extended pathway. Sometimes a narrow strip of land forms the only path when walking on the sea-coast. Then we are in danger of falling, slipping over a precipice; and but for a helping hand many would have thus perished. These words are singularly applicable. Similar are those of the Psalmist, Ps. xviii. 35, 36; cxix. 32 (Prov. iv. 12). This enlarged pathway will secure two things. (1) *Safety*. “Kept” by the divine hand. No other power to keep. In the king’s highway alone is security. This a way of holiness. “A highway shall be there, it shall be called the way of holiness.” (2) *Peace*. Jabez not only desires safety, but prays that sin may not “grieve” him. This a fine test of sincerity of prayer and the cleanness of heart. What various motives, prompt obedience to divine laws! What a great gulph of moral disparity between the sayings, *Sin hurts me physically, and sin grieves me spiritually!* [*The Study*, 1874].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 10. *The Mighty Hand*. Available, ever ready, and always sufficient. A hand of universal control and perpetual activity. “God’s right hand doeth valiantly.”

Ver. 13. *Othniel’s adventure* (cf. Jos. xv. 15, 16; Judg. i. 12, 13; iii. 9). The brave man waits not for numbers and applause. Enough for him to know the cause is just, that danger threatens, that action is required.

“Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts
them all.”

Ver. 18. *The Egyptian convert*. This passage records a very interesting fact,

the marriage of an Egyptian princess to a descendant of Caleb. 1. The marriage must have taken place in the wilderness. 2. The barriers of a different national language and national religion kept the Hebrews separate from the Egyptians; but they did not wholly prevent intimacies, and even occasional intermarriages between private individuals of the two nations. 3. Ere such unions, however, could be sanctioned, the Egyptian party must have renounced idolatry, and this daughter of Pharaoh, as appears from her name, had become a convert to the worship of the God of Israel [*Jamieson*].

HOMILETICS.

THE POSTERITY OF SIMEON.—*Verses 24-43.*

The sons of Simeon are classed with those of Judah, because their possession was partly taken out of the extensive territory of Judah (Jos. xix. 1).

I. The cities they possessed. The same list given (Jos. xix. 2-6) with a little difference in spelling; eighteen given. Virtue and self-control better than taking a city (Prov. xvi. 32). **II. The conquests they made.** In the days of Hezekiah a generation animated to conquests. 1. *Some took Gedor* (ver. 39). A place in Arabia, the entrance of Gedor, inhabited by Ham's posterity. 2. *Others took Mount Seir* (ver. 42). Smote the remnant of devoted Amalekites and possessed the country. The curse pronounced on Ham and Amalek, though dormant, was not dead. To Simeon the curse (Gen. xlix. 5-7) was a blessing, to the others a terrible reality. **III. The prosperity they enjoyed.** 1. *Increase of numbers.* They increased wonderfully, but not like the children of Judah (ver. 27). 2. *Enlargement of boundaries.* In possession of limited area, they were forced to seek accommodation elsewhere. They established themselves in the fertile pastures of Gedor (Gerar), which soon proved inadequate, and a new colony settled on Mount Seir. They enjoyed a land of peace and plenty, numerous flocks and quiet habitations. Thank God for fixed homes, but ever guard against the perils of prosperity.

SURVEY OF THE GENEALOGY.—*Verses 1-13.*

I. How great the obscurity of most men! Not many known and prominent here. But obscurity hides not God. We are *great* if the world gains by our life and example. **II. What folly to seek place and power only here!** From place we shall be ejected, and of power we shall be deprived. A family of princes were captives in exile (ver. 22). "Where will ye leave your glory?" **III. How needful to secure renown hereafter!** Better to have names written in heaven than rolled in lists of honour and published in daily papers. "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven," said the dying Haller, when friends congratulated him on the honour of receiving a visit from the Emperor Joseph II.

ORIGIN AND USE OF ARTS AND INVENTIONS.—*Verses 14, 21-23.*

I. Useful arts emanate from the wisdom and goodness of God. In early history man taught of God in special callings. Human inventions had no existence save in the purpose of God. Proof from reason and scripture. "This also cometh from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." **II. Useful arts are beneficial in their tendency.** They mitigate human toil and alleviate suffering; prolong human life, increase sources of comfort, and secure universal peace. **III. Therefore all engaged in useful arts promote the welfare of society.** It is better to excel in trade than to gain dominions of territory. In the construction of the tabernacle an illustration of this principle. Let us be among the "willing-hearted" and the "wise-hearted," and contribute our share. "Produce! produce! were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then" [*Carlyle*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 32. *These cities unto reign of David.* In consequence of the sloth or cowardice of the Simeonites, some of the cities within their allotted territory were only nominally theirs, but were never taken from the Philistines until David's time, when the Simeonites having forfeited all claim to them, he assigned them to his own tribe of Judah [*Jamieson*]. Hence danger of delay.

Ver. 33. *Habitations and genealogy;* or Homes and Registers.

Ver. 38. *Princes in Families.* Thirteen names corresponding with number of cities in first list (verses 28-31), so that the princes mentioned were registered chiefs of those cities in the time of Hezekiah (see ver. 41) [*Speak. Com.*]. 1. Families and kingdoms of divine appointment. 2. Rulers of families and kingdoms represented God and order, justice and truth. 3. Hence subjection needful for order, happiness, and success.

Ver. 40. *Fat pastures.* 1. Prepared

by God, natural formation. 2. Discovered by God's direction. They found, did not create. Application in comfortable homes, favourable situations and spiritual refreshment.

Ver. 43. *Doom of Amalek.* Sin not forgotten, judgment not neglected nor fails in execution. Curses may be dormant but not dead. "Preservation from the sword of Joshua (Ex. xvii. 13), of Saul (1 Sam. xv. 7), and of David (2 Sam. viii. 12) was but a reseruation to this utter destruction, which God had solemnly sworn, with hand laid upon his own throne (Ex. xvii. 16)" [*Trapp*].

Vers. 39-43. *A fragment of famous history.* Learn from this chronicle of events — 1. Expedition first, under thirteen leaders, with many followers, against Hamites and Mehurrim. 2. Expedition second, smaller, but more adventurous. Under four chiefs, a band of 500 smote powerful enemies and possessed their quarters. Be valiant for God spiritually.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 9. *Honourable.* Virtue and honour are such inseparable companions that the heathens would admit no man into the temple of honour who did not pass through the temple of virtue.

"If it be of a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive"
[*Shakespeare*].

Ver. 10. *Evil.* The greatest evil is sin. 1. In the nature of it, as being contrary to the greatest good, even God. 2. In the effect and consequences of it here and hereafter. 3. Therefore to pray against sin is to pray against all other evils whatever; for the devil, the evil one, cannot hurt us but by sin [*Bishop Hopkins*].

Be with me. Ora et labora is the legend of the Christian's faith, and the plan of his life. His fervent

prayer begets honest, manly, unshrinking work; his work as it is faithful and it is faithful in proportion as he realises it is for God, throws him back upon prayer [*Stevenson*].

Vers. 14, 21, 23. *Craftsmen, potters, &c.* If all men affected one and the same trade of life or pleasure of recreation, it were not possible they could live one by another; neither could there be any use of commerce, whereby life is maintained. It is good reason we should make a right use of this gracious dispensation of the Almighty, that we should improve our several dispositions and faculties to the advancing of the common stock, and that we should neither encroach upon each other's profession nor be apt to censure each other's recreation [*Bishop Hall*].

CHAPTER V.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This ch. contains Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh east of Jordan, with two episodes, one on the wars of these tribes, and the other on the removal by Tilgath-pileser. The upper Assyrian monarchy began 1273 B.C., the lower 747 B.C. [*Murphy*].

Vers. 1-10.—Reuben lost his birthright. The priesthood given to Levi; the double portion (Deu. xxi. 17) to Joseph, whose sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, reckoned as distinct tribes. Judah had supremacy, ver. 2. Chief ruler, prince, *i.e.*, David, and eventually Messiah (Mic. v. 1). Ver. 3. sons four, as Gen. xli. 9; Ex. vi. 14. Vers. 4-6. *The line of Joel.* Ver. 7. Brethren, kinsmen of Joel, chief was Jeiel. Ver. 10. Hagarites, Hagarenes (Ps. lxxxiii. 6), a tribe of North Arabia, perhaps *Agraioi* of Strabo [*Speak. Com.*], or Ismaelites as descendants of Hagar.

Vers. 11-17.—Gad. Chiefs, ver. 12, and seven others, ver. 13. "Their pedigree traced back ten generations. For Buz and Ahi are really parts of one name, Buzahi, for which Sept. has Ahibuz by transposing parts. Not informed to what family Guni belonged" [*Murphy*], must have been contemporary with Solomon or David, therefore before the secession of ten tribes.

Vers. 18-22.—Wars of Eastern tribes with Arabs. Jetur and Nephish (Naphish) among descendants of Ismael in Chr. i. 31, and in Gen. xxv. 15. Of Nodab, nothing known. Hagarites made raids from desert. Hence war in self-defence. Confederate tribes prevailed over invaders. Booty indicates dense population and extensive campaign; "may be compared with that from Midianites (Num. xxxi. 32-35), and does not exceed amount which kings of Assyria constantly carried off in raids upon tribes of no great note or name" [*Speak. Com.*]. Captivity of Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 29).

Vers. 23-26.—Half Manasseh, north of Gad. Three names given of three parts or "summits" of Antilebanon. Valour or special bravery of Manassites (*cf.* ch. xii. 21). Famous, *i.e.*, "men of names," celebrated men. Transgressed, a long description in 2 Kings xvii. He carried, *i.e.*, Tilgath. Pul only levied tribute on the land. Deported to places named, as parts of region to which remainder of ten tribes removed by Shalmaneser.

HOMILETICS.

THE FORFEITED BLESSING.—Verses 1-3.

Reuben, rash and impulsive, lost splendid position and power through passion (Gen. xlix. 4). **I. The sin through which the blessing was lost.** A most abominable and iniquitous act, worthy of death under law of Moses (Lev. xviii. 8), and not to be mentioned among Christians (1 Cor. v. 1). Sin dethrones from excellency, stamps disgrace upon character, and entails loss upon posterity. **II. The persons to whom the blessing was bestowed.** Taken from one and given to another. 1. *Joseph's sons had double portion.* Ephraim and Manasseh reckoned distinct tribes; blessed by the expressed will of Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 22) and in the partition of Canaan (Jos. xvi., xvii.). 2. *Judah had pre-eminence.* Honour to Judah, and birthright to Joseph. One need not envy the other. (a) *In power.* The sceptre assigned to Judah (Gen. xlix. 10). (b) *In dignity.* From him came chief ruler David first, and afterwards the Saviour. Those related to Christ, the Prince of Peace, have a better portion than men endowed with wealth and perishing honour. **III. The principle on which the blessing was given.** The writer careful to explain why Judah was made supreme. "The genealogy not reckoned after the birth-right;" not in natural, but in providential order; "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

THE LINE OF REUBEN.—*Verses 1-10.*

I. The chief of the tribe. The genealogy traced to Beerah, the head of the clan, when carried into Assyria (ver. 6). What are termed “unfortunate positions” and “evil days” are controlled, if not created, by God. “My times are in thy hand.” **II. The privileges of the tribe.** Degraded, but not entirely disinherited. Sullied honour not always lost happiness. Reuben’s sons had their share of honour and estate, were “valiant” in war, and “helped” in victory. Their inheritance received before Judah or Ephraim. **III. The enlargements of the tribe** (vers. 9, 10). They increased in cattle and population, crowded out their neighbours, and extended conquests into the wilderness and near the Euphrates. **IV. The disinheritance of the tribe.** The prediction exactly fulfilled in history, “Thou shalt not excel.” Reuben made no figure, and produced no judge, prophet, or eminent person. He lingered among the sheepfolds, preferred the shepherd’s pipe to the trumpet of battle. Robbed of pre-eminence, his individuality fades away. Remote from the centre of government and religion, he lost faith in Jehovah, “went after other gods,” and finally carried off into captivity.

UNITY AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS.—*Verses 11-22.*

The three tribes united went to war and gained victory. **I. A description of the army** (ver. 18). 1. *Courageous in character.* “Sons of valour.” 2. *Skilful in the use of weapons.* “Men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with the bow and skilful in war.” 3. *Aggressive in spirit.* “Went out to war.” 4. *Great in number.* “Four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore.” **II. The method in which they fought** (ver. 20). 1. *United in rank.* “Men who could keep rank” (1 Chr. xii. 3). 2. *Earnest in prayer.* “For they cried to God in the battle.” 3. *Thoroughly reliant upon God.* “They put their trust in him.” “They cried unto thee and were delivered; they trusted in thee and were not confounded.” **III. The success they achieved.** Not only “helped” and “delivered,” but enriched. 1. *The booty enormous.* “They took away their cattle,” &c. (ver. 21). 2. *The slain numerous.* “There fell down many slain,” &c. The Church united, courageous, and prayerful, ever victorious.

THE APOSTATE TRIBES.—*Verses 23-26.*

Special attention paid to this great sin of the tribes, this beginning of national evil and national suffering. **I. Shameful apostasy.** A full description in 2 Kings xvii. of idolatries, heathen and native. 1. *Beginning in forgetfulness of God.* “They transgressed against the God of their fathers” (ver. 25). One known to them as a nation, venerated by their fathers and worthy of their service. 2. *Ending in forsaking God.* “Went a whoring after the gods of the people.” Forsaking their own God, they worshipped idols of the heathen. Man must have a god, will worship something, even if he adores himself. *Whoring*, a strong, emphatic word, indicative of special aggravation and intense jealousy. **II. Merited judgment.** We have a full and impressive vindication of divine procedure. Patience exhausted, and God, whom they had forsaken, permitted captivity to cure national evils. 1. *Utter defeat.* (a) First God stirred up Pul, King of Assyria (ver. 26). The first of northern sovereigns who invaded Palestine was bribed by silver to return (2 Kings xv. 16-20). Tribute was imposed, which caused prophetic protest, great dissatisfaction, and

impoverished the kingdom by reducing its territory and its inhabitants. (b) Then Tiglath inflicted utter defeat. Valour and numbers of no avail. When God has left us, defence is gone. 2. *Helpless exile.* They were "carried away" into distance and slavery. God's instruments, many and varied, to chastise. Idolatry most destructive sin to people loved and led by Jehovah. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Judah prevailed.* 1. God in family history. 2. Persons giving pre-eminence to families, David and Messiah from Judah. 3. Grace distinguishing families in civil and religious matters, in national and individual life.

Vers. 18-20. *Cried in battle.* So did Jabez (ch. iv.); Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. xx.); the thundering legion; the late King of Sweden, whose prayer before the great battle of Lutzen, where he fell, was, "Jesus, vouchsafe this day to be my strong helper, and give me courage to fight for the honour of thy name." Prayer alone he held the surest piece of his whole armour [*Trapp*].

Ver. 25. *Transgressed.* 1. *Danger of proximity to the world.* The tribes on the borders had intercourse with neigh-

bouring people, then drawn into sin. 2. *Fearful consequences of yielding to enticements of the world.* Cast off by God, invaded by enemies, and displaced by Providence. Be governed by faith, not by sense. Lot.

Ver. 26. *Stirred up.* 1. God's influence over men's spirit. *Stirred up*, moved, prompted. "The king's heart," the most absolute and uncontrollable will, "is in the hand of the Lord as rivers of water" (Prov. xxi. 1). 2. God's control over man's conduct. Despotic rule, political projects, and ambitious wars directed to the fulfilment of his purpose. Pul restrained in conduct. "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Is. x. 7).

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER V.

Ver. 2. *Judah's pre-eminence.*

"Some must be great. Great officers will have

Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lift him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill"
[*Cowper*].

Ver. 18. *Valiant men.* It is not the will of God that his people should be a timorous people [*Mt. Henry*].

Ver. 20. *Helped.* We are like William of Orange, with a few followers and an empty purse, making war against the master of half the world with the mines of Peru for a treasury.

But like William, too, when questioned concerning our resources, we can reply, "Before we took up this cause we entered into a close alliance with the King of Kings" [*Sword and Trowel*].

Ver. 26. *Carried away.* When lesser warnings will not serve, God looks into his quiver for deadly arrows. Abuse of mercy ripens us for judgment [*Vieholls*].

"Heaven gives the needful but neglected call,

What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts

To wake the soul to sense of future scenes?"

[*Young*]

CHAPTER VI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter refers wholly to tribe of Levi. Gives the family of Aaron, vers. 1-15; the descendants of Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, vers. 16-30; and the pedigrees of the song-masters, vers. 31-48; the line from Aaron to Ahimaaz, vers. 49-53; and the towns assigned to the tribe, vers. 54-81.

Vers. 1-3.—The sons of Levi. The genealogy of Levi follows (Ex. vi. 16-25), as far as Phinehas, after which the writer must have had documents before him which have not come down to us [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 4-15.—Line of priests unto Captivity. This list must have been obtained from the priestly registers. It is given in inverse order (Ezra vii. 1-5), with omission of names between Meraioth and Azariah II. It wants the name Meraioth between Ahitub II. and Zadok II. (ix. 11). It is not a succession of high priests, but simply the line from Eleazar to Jehozadak [cf. *Murphy*]. *Zadok*, ver. 8, priest with Abiathar (2 Sam. viii. 18), one probably in Gibeon, the other in Zion. *Azariah*, ver. 9, grandson of Zadok, in the court of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 2). *Temple*, ver. 10, first to distinguish it from second existing in days of writer. *Amariah*, ver. 11, high priest under Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. xix. 11). *Shallum*, ch. ix. 11 (Neh. xi. 11). *Hilkiah*, ver. 12, in office under Josiah, took part in reformation then (2 Kings xxii. 4-14; xxiii. 4; 2 Chr. xxxiv. 9-22). *Seraiah*, ver. 14, put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at time of Captivity (2 Kings xxv. 18-21; Jer. lii. 24-27).

Vers. 16-30.—Sons of Levi. Having traced high priestly line from Levi to Jehozadak (vers. 1-15), writer returns to fountain head and gives general account of branches of tribe of Levi as far as materials allow. *Vers. 16-21. The Gershomites*, after first-born of Moses (Ex. ii. 22). *Vers. 17-19.* These appear in Ex. vi. *Vers. 20, 21.* This line appears to coincide with part of that of Asaph (vers. 39-43), except in Jeaterai, who may have been another son of Zerah. *Vers. 22-28. The Kohathites.* The same as that of Heman (vers. 33-38). Object of list to trace genealogy of Samuel, prophet and judge of Israel. *Vers. 29, 30. The Merarites.*

Vers. 31-48.—Pedigrees of the three song-masters. Asaph, Heman, Ethan, or Jeduthan (Ps. lxxxix.), sons of Korah, set over departments of musical service. *House*, a tent erected by David to receive the ark, considerable time before building of the Temple. *Wanted in order*, instituted by David, doubtless directed by Holy Spirit, for regulation of worship. *33. Shemuel, i. e., Samuel.* Ver. 48. *Levites* employed in door-keeping or attending to priests.

Vers. 49-53.—Office of Aaron and his sons (cf. vers. 3-8). Eleazar, third son, chief of Levites (Num. iii. 32), ministered with his brother Ithamar, before death of Aaron, and succeeded him (Num. xx. 28). In Eleazar's family high priesthood remained till the time of Eli, who was descended from Ithamar. It returned to Eleazar in Zadok, fulfilling the words of 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Vers. 54-81.—The cities given to priestly families and to other Levites. Jos. xxi., its parallel. 54-60. *Cities given to Aaron's family.* *Castles*, places of defence against robbers or beasts of prey. *Vers. 61-81. Cities of the Levites*, their number and distribution: 13 cities to Gershom, ver. 62; 12 to Merari, ver. 63, as in Jos. xxi. 31-40; cities of other Kohathites, vers. 66-70; of Gershomites, vers. 71-76; and of Merarites, vers. 77-81. *Vers. 80, 81,* agree with those in Joshua. Ten only of twelve named. Only 42 out of 48 named, and some different from original cities assigned to Levites. This proof of accuracy of author. He remembers whole numbers in time of Joshua. But political arrangements readjusted in course of ages. State of things given which had supervened in time of David (vii. 2) [cf. *Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

A GLANCE OF HISTORY.—Verses 1-15.

In these verses we have a glance from deliverance in Egypt to bondage in captivity. Notice two or three features of the period.

I. The inequalities of men. Inequalities physical, mental, and social appear in whatever light we regard mankind. In this list some exalted to

sacred office and perform noble deeds. Others fall into sin and disgrace. Vast differences in character and career! Royalty and beggary, grandeur and wretchedness, palaces and slums! "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor." **II. The vicissitudes of families.** Aaron a priest, but Aaron's sons terrors of divine justice. Samuel a prophet, but Samuel's sons perverted justice and dishonoured religion. According to political and religious feeling, ancestors exalted and descendants rejected. **III. The events of Providence.** Deliverance from bondage. Scenes of conflict and triumph. Times of revival, relapse and punishment. Accession and dethronement of kings. Providences, special, striking, and constant. "He hath not dealt so with any nation."

THE SONS OF LEVI.—Verses 16–30.

I. Their chief Fathers. *Gershom* the eldest, *Kohath* the second, and *Merari* the youngest son accompanied Levi into Egypt with Jacob (Gen. xlv. 11), and became heads of three great divisions of Levites. **II. Their numerous descendants.** Many unknown or passed over. Others eminent in character, distinguished in service, and remarkable in career. Children of privilege and monuments of judgment, born in sunshine and dying in shadows. What a mixture of good men and bad men in life! What a contrast between character and circumstances, beginnings and ends!

THE MINISTRY OF SONG.—Verses 31–48.

Song a divine gift, has a mission or ministry. **I. Song an element of Christian worship.** "The service of song in the house of the Lord." A branch of natural and revealed religion in all ages, prevalent in Jewish and heathen worship. A duty reverently to be performed. Its decay a mark of desolation (Ezek. xxvi. 13). **II. Song an expression of human feeling.** Joy and sorrow, gratitude and prayer, must have appropriate and audible expression. When the ark is in captivity, in times of darkness and depression, our harps are hung upon the willows. When the ark finds rest and fixed residence in times of revival, we sing praise to God (David's joy, 2 Sam. vi. 17–21, xvi. 1–3). "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." **III. Song a power for which its possessors are responsible.** In pagan and Jewish nations recognised as a divine gift. It is a talent entrusted to individuals; a faculty to be cultivated, for which there is room, and which should be consecrated to God. The duty of all who have the gift to lay it upon the altar of God, in the home, the school, and the sanctuary.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Three chief Fathers.* Their names, history, and pedigree.

Ver. 3. *Nadab and Abihu.* Improper spirit in worship; unlawful method and awful judgment. Perished on day of consecration! (Lev. x.)

Ver. 4. *Phineas,* a memorable name (Num. xxv. 7–13; Jos. xxii. 10–33; Ps. cvi. 30, 31).

Ver. 10. *Azariah's* important

service. High priest in temple of Solomon. "*Eecuted,*" &c. Some think that he withstood King Uzziah, and thus risked life in faithful reproof (2 Chr. xxvi. 17, 18).

Ver. 13. *Hilkiah* most celebrated of seven bearing this name as priest and reformer. He discovered "the Book of the Law" (2 Kings xxii. 8); was zealous in reformations of Josiah

(2 Kings xxii. 14-20, xxiii. 4-27); and prominent in observing the Passover (2 Chr. xxv. 1-19).

Ver. 15. *Jehozadak*. Three forms of this name (see Ezra iii. 2; Hag. i. 1; and this verse). Only two forms in original. *Jehozadak* full form, and *Jozadak* contracted. The meaning is, "Jehovah is righteous." It is noted

as remarkable that the heads of both the priestly and the royal stock carried to Babylon should have had names (*Zedekiah* and *Jehozadak*) composed of the same elements, and assertive of the "justice of God," which their sufferings showed forth so signally [*Speak. Com.*].

Ver. 22. *Korah's* sin and punishment (Num. xvi. 1-33).

HOMILETICS.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.—Verses 32-53.

The order of song a matter of importance in time of David. The ark had a settled place. Choral service was established in the Temple, and chief singers were appointed. **I. Worship varied in its forms.** Music and singing, prayer and praise, must not become formal and stereotyped. "All manner of service." **II. Lively in its spirit.** Dulness and despondency dishonouring to God and unprofitable to men. "This duty must be our delight." Then it becomes attractive and helpful. "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing." **III. Orderly in its method.** "They waited on their office according to their order." Things not left to chance; arrangements made with care and thought. Each his own work, place, and time in keeping up the service. "The order of the sanctuary." "Let all things be done decently and in order." **IV. Universal in its participation.** They "waited with their children" in the choir. The service of song for the whole "congregation" not left to the choir to sing, nor to the preacher to pray. All *hearts* and all *lips* must join. Congregational worship must be sought and cultivated. "Let the *people* praise thee, let *all* the people praise thee."

THE ANCIENT PRIESTHOOD.—Verses 49-53.

Aaron and his sons, "the house of Aaron," appointed to the priestly office. Other Levites given to them and performed subordinate duties. **I. Its sacred dignity.** Not the investiture of man; endowments for the work from God. The office not a personal assumption, but in obedience to divine call, manifest in Providence, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the help of friends. "No man taketh this honour unto himself." **II. Its solemn duties.** On the brazen altar, the golden altar and the mercy seat in the holy of holies, they performed their functions. This chiefly "to make an atonement for Israel" (ver. 49). A constant need for this; the life of the individual and the nation imperilled by sin; covenant relations must be restored. "The day of atonement," an impressive scene and a typical truth. **III. Its typical character.** The high priests in official character, the ceremony of sprinkling blood were figures of good things to come. Under the gospel all believers are priests, ministering to God in his spiritual temple. Each has an appointed service which contributes to the perpetual worship and benefit of the whole. Only in fulfilment of prescribed ordinance can we secure the presence and favour of Jehovah.

CITIES AND DWELLINGS OF LEVITES.—Verses 54-81.

First cities given to the priestly family of Aaron (vers. 54-60). Next the number and distribution of those assigned to other Levites (vers. 61-81).

Regard them as—**I. A fulfilment of prediction.** Jacob's dying prophecy was accomplished and this tribe was "scattered in Israel" (Gen. xlix. 7). God's people are preserved, and events are arranged for their possessions. **II. An arrangement of providence.** These cities wisely ordered, a provision of mercy and safety. 1. *To facilitate the administration.* Centres of justice and law, freeing individuals from avenging themselves, fixing authority and promoting peace and order. 2. *To disseminate light.* Each city the centre of light and instruction, the place where law was expounded and administered. A school of learning and social influence to the people. 3. *To support the ministry.* Cities allotted to priests and Levites for residence and maintenance. Certain provisions made for spiritual service. Men set apart for God, dependent upon the people they serve. Those who "preach the gospel" may reasonably expect "to live of the gospel." "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 31. *The vicissitudes of the Ark.* Without a proper resting-place from victory over Philistines in time of Eli till the tabernacle of David, about fifty years (1 Sam. iv. ; 2 Sam. vi.).

Vers. 32 and 33. *Waited on their office.* 1. Each an office or work, fixed in choir, leading in service of song, officiating at the altar, and waiting at the door. 2. Each responsible for the performance of his work—not envying his neighbour, waiting for something better; but with diligence, order,

and delight each fills his position and renders his service.

Vers. 31–48. *Three chief song-masters.* Heman's pedigree (vers. 33–38). Pedigree of Asaph, the Gershonite (vers. 39–43). He stood on right hand. Pedigree of Ethan, the Merarite (vers. 44–47). He stood on the left of Heman.

Vers. 49–53. Priests and Levites, two orders of ministry in the Jewish Church. Their divine appointment, special duties, and worldly provision.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 31. *Service.* The three intentions of song: To improve the understanding, to improve the heart, and to soothe the mind. The three things which ought to pervade song: Perfect learning, perfect vigour, perfect nature [*Catherall*].

Ver. 32. *Waited in office.* Man hath his daily work of body or mind appointed [*Milton*].

"A servant with this clause

Makes drudgery divine:

Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,

Makes that and the action fine"

[*Geo. Herbert*].

Ver. 54. *Cities.* If the history of

cities and their influence on their respective territories be deducted from the history of humanity, the narrative remaining would be of no very attractive description. If anything be certain, it would seem to be certain that man is constituted to realise his destiny from his association with man, more than from any contact with places. The great agency in calling forth his capabilities, for good or for evil, is that of his fellows. The picturesque may be with the country, but the intellectual, generally speaking, must be with the town [*Dr. Vaughan's Age of Cities*].

CHAPTER VII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] *Vers. 1-5.—Issachar.* A tribe of more than average strength, since the entire return from all the tribes, except Judah, was no more than 800,000 men (2 Sam. xxiv. 9) [*Speak. Com.*]. In *days of David*, ver. 2, probably from census taken by Joab (xxi.).

Vers. 6-12.—Benjamin. Ten. Gen. xlv. 21; five, viii. 1; *three* here, most eminent mentioned, or other families extinct. Ver. 7. *Bela*, list different from ch. viii. 3-5 and from Num. xxvi. 40. "Probably persons mentioned not literally 'sons,' but among later descendants of Bela, chief men of family in time of David's census" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 10. *Jedtael*, sons may include grandsons. Ver. 12. Three other sons of Benjamin named (*cf.* Num. xxxvi. 39; Gen. xlv. 21; and ch. viii. 5).

Ver. 13.—Naphtali (*cf.* Gen. xlv. 24; Num. xxvi. 48). His territory originally included in Judah (Jos. xix. 40).

Vers. 14-19.—Manasseh. An intricate and defective passage, appears to refer to western side of Jordan; other side in ch. v. 23-26. Ver. 15. *Daughters* (*cf.* account Jos. xvii. 3-6; Num. xxvi. 33). Vers. 16, 17. None of these mentioned elsewhere, unless "Bedan" is the "judge" of 1 Sam. xii. 11. Ver. 19. "This paragraph is of peculiar interest as illustrating the freedom and independence with which sons of Israel moved in period before the new king arose that knew not Joseph" [*Murphy*].

Vers. 20-29.—Ephraim. Difficult to solve the question of chronology and genealogy of this passage. The line of Shuthelah is traced to seventh generation, viz., to another Shuthelah. "Ezer and Elead, perhaps two brothers of the first Shuthelah, *i.e.* own sons of Ephraim." Men of *Gath*, settled inhabitants (contrasted with strangers, nomadic Hebrews, Amalekites, &c.), attacked shepherds of Ephraim, and the conflict produced the usual result. Ver. 23. *Beriah*, "in evil," some render "a gift," to the house by the birth of another son. Ver. 24. *Beth-horon* (Jos. x. 10; xvi. 3-5; xviii. 13, 14). Vers. 25-27. Two other sons of Ephraim added, Rephah and Resheph, from latter sprang Joshua (Jehovah, Saviour). Elishama, son of Ammihud, prince of Ephraim in time of Exodus (Num. i. 10; ii. 18). *Nun*, for Nun (Num. xiii. 8-16). Vers. 28, 29. Possessions and boundaries of the two tribes here given.

Vers. 30-40.—Asher. Sons, daughters, and grandsons, given as in Gen. xlv. 17 and partly Num. xxvi. 44, if we allow for slight changes of spelling in names.

HOMILETICS.

REGISTERED SOLDIERS.—*Verses 1-40.*

In this chapter a genealogy of those tribes only who were "mighty men of valour."

I. Issachar, the industrious tribe (ver. 1-5). 1. *Patient in labour.* He possessed a fruitful district, willingly submitted to toil and tribute (*cf.* Gen. xlix. 14, 15; Jos. xix. 17-22). 2. *Great in number* (ver. 5). 3. *Valiant in war* (ver. 5). **II. Benjamin, the warlike tribe** (ver. 6-12). Quick, rapacious, and powerful (Gen. xlix. 27; *cf.* Judg. v. 14, xx. 16). Elud, Saul, Jonathan. Paul from this tribe. **III. Naphtali, the heroic tribe** (ver. 13). Beautiful and active, comparable to the gazelle (2 Sam. ii. 18). Remarkable also for culture. "He giveth goodly words," rich in poetry and speech (Gen. xlix. 21). **IV. Manasseh, the divided tribe** (ver. 14-19). One half of the tribe on the other side Jordan (ch. v. 23). Division, perhaps, according to the fitness of those who composed it at the time. More warlike adapted to coast of Jordan. **V. Ephraim, the exalted tribe** (ver. 20-29). Manasseh the elder, but Jacob gave the preference to Ephraim (Gen. xlviii. 10-12). Great things declared of this tribe in best days. Here notice—1. Its *bereavement* (ver. 21). 2. Its *possessions* (ver. 28). 3. Its

vicissitudes. Its predicted greatness (Gen. xviii. 19) nipped in the bud. Powerless to protect itself, thrown into grief, humbled, yet comforted and distinguished in its sons (ver. 27). **VI. Asher, the undistinguished tribe** (vers. 30-40). A few "choice and mighty men of valour," but inferior in numbers, no great record in sacred history, furnished no hero or judge to the nation. "One name only shines out of the general obscurity. The aged widow, 'Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser,' who, in the very close of the history, departed not from the Temple, 'but served God with fastings and prayers day and night'" [*Stanley*].

FAMILY SORROW.—Verses 21-23.

I. The cause of the sorrow. Gathites robbed sons of E. of their cattle, and slew them when defending themselves (ver. 21). Life often exposed and lost by wealth; the sword devours; death takes away children. Families bereaved and thrown into grief. "Ephraim mourned many days." **II. The sympathy in the sorrow.** "His brethren came to comfort him." The affliction of others should excite our own pity and grief. Relatives and intimate friends should ever be ready "to comfort" the bereaved. Hard to bear the burden alone. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Most available and tender is the help of one "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." **III. The remembrance of the sorrow.** Afflictions may be overcome, but occasions of them never forgotten. 1. *Perpetuated in joy.* Another son born (ver. 23) in Beriah. Like Seth, another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. 2. *Perpetuated in sorrow.* "It went evil with his house." Weeping yet rejoicing; humbled by the stroke, yet grateful for deliverance. God compensates for the loss in human sympathy, heavenly gifts, and perpetual joy. "The Lord bii deth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

"Shrink not from suffering. Each dear blow
From which the smitten spirit bleeds
Is but a messenger to show
The renovation which it needs."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Valiant men of might.* 1. Times of conflict. Days of war in Israel many. Thank God for peace and advance of civilisation and humanity. 2. Men fitted by God to engage in conflict. "Apt to the war and to battle" (ver. 40). Physical strength, skill in command, statesmanship, and success. The gift of God needful, and should be consecrated to holy purposes.

Ver. 17. *Bedan* (cf. mentioned in 1 Sam. xiii. 11). A great deliverer in Israel.

Ver. 24. *Loss replaced or a famous*

daughter. *Sherah*, a virtuous woman, who built cities at her own charge (one *Uzzen-sherah*, named after her), and became an honour to the family. "A gallant woman, famous in her generation for beautifying and fortifying of sundry cities. Thus also God made up Ephraim's loss" [*Trapp*].

Ver. 22. *A great leader*; Joshua, son of Nun. In name and work a type of Jesus; yet a contrast (Jos. xiii. 8-16). Human life a register and rapid genealogy, but we have a place and work.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Benjamin, son of Bilhan (vii. 10), great-grandson of son of Jacob. Posterity given on account of history of Saul. This tribe remained faithful during the revolt of the ten, and returned with Judah from Babylon.

Vers. 3-5.—The nine sons of this Bela are all different in name from the five sons of the earlier Bela (vii. 7). The names Gera, Naaman, and Shephuphan (Num. xxvi. 39) are heirlooms from the household of the former Benjamin (Judg. iii. 15) [*Murphy*].

Vers. 6-12.—Ehud same as vii. 10; others either Abihud of ver. 3, or Ahoah of ver. 4. Some of sons heads of houses in Geba, now Jeba, probably removed by force to Manhahath, ver. 7. Ver. 8. “*Shar*, from some untold cause, made a temporary migration to the plains of Moab, as Elimelech and David afterwards (Ruth i. 2; 1 Sam. xx. 3).” Ver. 9. *Hodesh*, third wife, from whom seven sons, some names indicating Moabitish affinity. Ver. 12. These places mentioned, Ezra ii. 33; Neh. vii. 37. *Lod*, same as *Lydda* (Acts ix. 32), which is now *Lydd* [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 13. *Ber* and *Sh.*, names to be attached to last verse to complete list of sons of Elpaal [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 14-18.—Nine sons of Beriah, vers. 14-16; seven other sons of Elpaal, vers. 17, 18; twelve altogether.

Vers. 19-21.—Nine sons of Shimi, the Shema (ver. 13), son of Elpaal, associated with Beriah.

Vers. 22-28.—Eleven sons of Shashak, son of Beriah, ver. 14. Ver. 27 *Jeroham* as Jeremoth, ver. 14. Ver. 28. *These*, descendants of Bilhan, given from beginning of ch. *Dwelt*. Jerusalem partly within the limits of the tribe of Benjamin (Jos. xviii. 28); but we do not hear of Benjamites inhabiting it until return from Captivity (1 Chr. ix. 13; Neh. xi. 4).

Vers. 29-40.—Genealogy of Saul and Jonathan. *Gibeon*, not Gibeah, capital of Saul's kingdom (1 Sam. x. 26; xiii. 2); modern name *El-jib*, five or six miles from Jerusalem. *Father*, i.e., chief of city, whose name Jehiel dropped out here, but given ch. ix. 35, where this genealogy is repeated. Ver. 30. *Baal*, between which and *Nadab* should come “*Ner*,” restored ch. ix. 36; *Zacher* (Zaochariah), to which add Mikloth, ch. ix. 37. Ver. 33. *Kish*, called after his uncle, ver. 30. *Abinadab*, another name for Ishui, 1 Sam. xiv. 49; xxxi. 2. *Esh-baal Ish-bosheth* (“man of shame”), as Jerub-baal and Jerub-besheth, 2 Sam. xi. 21. *Merib-baal* (“striving with Baal”) called Mephi-bosheth, 2 Sam. iv. 2. Ver. 36. *Jehodah*, *Jarah* in parallel list, ch. ix. 42; and *Rapha* (ver. 37) *Rephaiah* (ver. 43). Ver. 40. This genealogy of the house of Saul appears, by the number of generations, to belong probably to time of Hezekiah (*cf.* ch. iv. 41). Ulam's “sons' sons” are in the thirteenth generation from Jonathan, as Hezekiah is in the thirteenth generation from David [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE NATURE OF INSPIRED HISTORY.—Verses 1-40.

I. The materials of which it is composed. Persons and events histories and genealogies, exhortations and warnings, giving variety and interest.

II. The difficulties which surround it. In names and repetitions, chronology, numbers, and authorship. Difficulties in history and condition of text itself. But these do not destroy the value of the record. Difficulties an evidence in favour of its Divine character, in harmony with its professed design, and a moral test and training. “The very difficulties and limitations of revelation are adapted to the conditions of moral growth. It requires and repays toil. It tasks, tries, and puzzles and strengthens faith. It is like man to make everything regular, easy, and plain; but that is not like the God of nature, of history, and of the Bible” [*Smyth*]. **III. The principles on which it is written.** Special in design; substantial unity in authorship, periods, and growth. Hence care in choice of matter, and providence in preservation of the records. Methods to bring in prominence and to keep in shade. Records in

full, and apparently insignificant allusions; but one grand aim, one directing force, one unbroken leadership in all ages, arranging and guiding for the accomplishment of one purpose.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.—Verses 1-32.

The tribe mentioned, ch. vii. 5-12; reverted to because Saul, the first king of Israel, came from this tribe. The genealogy contains its chief men, and forms an introduction to the history recorded in these books. **I. The changes through which it passed.** Its history to entrance into Promised Land as meagre as afterwards full. After departure from Egypt, the smallest tribe but one (Num. i. 36), in the time of the Judges involved in civil war, upon the occasion of iniquity of Gibeah, almost extinguished, and little hope of revival, for nearly all women slain, and the eleven other tribes bound by oath not to marry their daughters to any man belonging to Benjamin (Judg. xix. 20, 21; xxi. 10, 21). But increase of tribe so rapid, that in time of David it numbered 59,434 able men (1 Chr. vii. 6-12); in that of Asa, 280,000 (2 Chr. xiv. 8); and in that of Jehoshaphat, 200,000 (2 Chr. xvii. 17). The tribe honoured with giving the first king to Israel, and after the exile, along with Judah, constituted the flower of the Jewish colony (*cf.* Ezra xi. 1; x. 9). **II. The notices by which it is characterised.** Several circumstances conduce to the importance of this small tribe. 1. The only tribe that produced skilful archers, men expert with the bow, ver. 40 (*cf.* 1 Sam. xx. 20; 2 Sam. i. 22; 2 Chr. xvii. 17), and with sling (Judg. xx. 16). 2. From this tribe sprang a deliverer. After first conquest of country the nation under foreign yoke, groaned in misery, and turned to Ehud, son of Gera, for help (ver. 6). Proficient in use of left hand, a practice confined to Benjamites, who did work with small risk (*cf.* Judg. iii. 15; xx. 16; 1 Chr. xii. 2). 3. Baanah and Rechab, captains of predatory bands, were of "the children of Benjamin" (2 Sam. iv. 2).

THE ROYAL FAMILY.—Verses 33-40.

A particular account given. **I. Its head or chief.** "Saul, son of Kish." Good-looking and of commanding appearance, the choice of Israel, but not by the will of God (1 Sam. ix. 2). A man of valour, with capacity to govern and lead; the first king of Israel who occupied a position between the heroic age of Judges and the settled monarchy of David and Solomon. **II. Its posterity.** Numerous, able, and honoured in sacred genealogy. Jonathan's line given for about ten generations. The list ends in Ulam, whose family became famous in the tribe (ver. 40), and qualified to serve their country. This better than wealth and high position. In this list trace the hand of David in fulfilling his promise (1 Sam. xx. 15; 2 Sam. ix. 1, 3, 7). A mark of generosity to remember in prosperity what we promised in adversity.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 8 and 9. *Shaharaim*, the Benjamite polygamist, sent away (by divorce many think) Hushim and Baara, his wives, and this prepared the way for another, Hodesh (new, recent). Others say that Hodesh is another

name for Baara, so called because her husband, after long desertion, returned in affection to her.

Vers. 9-11. Seven unknown sons. How many pass away never mentioned, unknown and buried in oblivion!

Ver. 13. *Drove away.* A deed showing—1. That inheritance gained by violence may be taken away again. It is insecure. Wicked schemes may prosper, but justice tracks their steps and ruin is inevitable. "So are the ways of everyone that is greedy of gain, which taketh away the life of the owners thereof." 2. Hence retribution certain. In ch. vii. 21, the men of Gath slew the Ephraimites; in this verse Beriah and Shema "drove away the inhabitants of Gath." "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Ver. 28. *Dwelling in Jerusalem.* After return from Babylon, in the city was danger, civic duties and lack of population. Hence—1. *Preference for position of duty and danger.* 2. *Imitation of noble example.* Their ancestors dwelt in the city, and they were induced to take their place. "The glory of children are their fathers." Let us become children of "parents passed into the skies," take their place and carry on their work. 3. *Blessedness in the result.* "The people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem" (Neh. xi. 2).

Ver. 33. *Jonathan, who was, as the*

Romans said of Pompey, a most amiable son of an odious father [*Trapp*].

Vers. 33, 34. Suggestive names. *Esh-baal*, Ishbosheth (2 Sam. ii. 8; iii. 7-14; iv. 4-12). *Meri-baal*, Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 12). The Hebrew word *bosheth* is always applied in Scripture to denote an idol, "as exposing the devotee to shame, as well as being an abomination to the Lord." *Esh*, a man of shame, and *Merib-baal* (contender against Baal), the destroyer of shame, exterminator of idols [*Gesenius*].

Ver. 40. *All these sons.* 1. *The natural succession of the race.* We read of "sons," "children," and "fathers," and "children's children." "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh." "*The earth* is a stage, persons passing and vanishing before our eyes" [*Beza*]. 2. *The moral connection of the race.* Men an honour or dishonour to their own lineage; influenced by their fathers as they are influencing posterity. There are laws of influence and dependence which run through the whole race. Every human being sustains a relation, possesses a right and is endowed with power to subserve the great end. "No man liveth unto himself."

CHAPTER IX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] In this chapter a list of inhabitants in Jerusalem (vers. 1-34); and genealogy of Saul repeated (vers. 35-44).

Vers. 1-6.—*Reckoned*, registered in form of gen. First after captivity, 4 classes. *Nethinims*, root *nathan*, "to give," a sort of *hieroduli*, or sacred slaves—persons given to Levites to perform lower and more laborious duties of sanctuary [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 3. *Eph.* and *Man.*, some attached themselves to David when a fugitive, and were citizens of Jerusalem when it became capital (2 Chr. xxiv. 9). Vers. 4-6. Sons of Judah. *Uthai*, chief of family called after his name and not same as *Athaiah* in Neh. xi. 4 [cf. *Murphy*]. Ver. 5. *Shilonites* (*Shelani*), family of *Shelah*, third son of Judah (ch. iv. 21). *Zerah*, not mentioned after return, though an officer of this house was in Persian court (Neh. xi. 24).

Vers. 7-9.—*Sons of Benjamin.* *Sallu's* gen. different from that in Neh. xi. 7, 8. Vers. 10-13. Three priests, heads of families in Jerusalem, origin of their names found in ch. xxiv. 7-17.

Vers. 14-16.—*Levites.* *Shemaiah* head (Neh. xi. 15). *Nehemiah* and author of *Chronicles* fairly agree. The principal differences are that *Nehemiah* contracts "Obadiah" into "Abda" (ver. 17), gives *Shemaiah* an additional ancestor, *Bunni* (ver. 15), and in gen. of *Mataniah* substitutes "Zabdi" for "Zichri" (ver. 16) [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 17-27.—*Porters, i.e.*, keepers of the temple gates (2 Sam. xvii. 26; Mark xiii. 3; John x. 3). *Ver. 18.* *Companies*, orders or courses of service. *Ver. 19.* *Korahites* occupied a higher position, their office more directly connected with sacred service than others. *Ver. 21.* *Porter*, chief in reign of David (ch. xxvi. 1, 2; xxvii. 2). *Tabernacle*, lit. tent of meeting (Ex. xxix. 42), and points to tabernacle on Mount Zion in time of David. *Ver. 22.* *Seer*, ancient popular term for prophet. *Ver. 23.* *Children*, office hereditary; *wards*, according to watches in set time. *Ver. 24.* *Quarters* (cf. ver. 18 and ch. xxvi. 14-16). *Ver. 25.* *Seven* (2 Kings xi. 5), change of watch on Sabbath, which began at sunset. *Ver. 26.* *Chambers*, for use of priests (1 Kings vi. 6; xii. 18; xxii. 14). *Ver. 27.* *Lodged* during week of office.

Vers. 28-34.—Various other functions of Levites. *Charge of vessels*, "sacrificial bowls, trays for the shew-bread, and cups and flagons for the libations, vessels for holding stores not directly used in worship," also ver. 29. *Charge of ointment*, compounding which of special service, ver. 30 (cf. Ex. xxx. 23). *Charge of baking*, ver. 31. *Charge of shew-bread*, laid in order on table every Sabbath, ver. 32 (cf. Lev. xxiv. 8). *Charge of singing*, ver. 33, free from any special duty besides supervision, therefore could devote themselves night and day. *Ver. 34.* Closes first part of chapter.

Vers. 35-44.—A repetition of ch. viii. 29-33. Some propose to cancel in one place or other. This unnecessary, *fitly* given in both places. In ch. viii. an account of subdivisions of tribe of Benjamin, and could not properly omit the most celebrated family of that tribe, that of Saul. Here bent on connecting the genealogical section of work with historical, and find it most convenient to effect the junction by re-introducing the gen. of the person with whose death his historical section opens [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

RETURNED EXILES.—*Verse 2.*

First implies that others returned and settled afterwards in places not occupied by first. Numbers returned successively under Ezra, Nehemiah, and in later periods. Some who returned to the ancient inheritance had lived before time of captivity (Ezra iii. 12; Hag. ii. 4-10). Four classes, representatives mentioned. 1. *Israelites*. Laymen. The whole nation including Judah. The name "Jews" gradually supplanted the name "Israelites," especially among foreigners. 2. *Priests*. Mediation essential idea of priesthood. Israel had representatives between them and Jehovah. The office typical, and a perpetual inheritance from father to son. 3. *Levites*. A special order to aid priests in higher functions. The first-born performed priestly offices before the organised temple service. To prevent disorder in domestic relations, and secure greater efficiency, primogeniture conferred upon tribe of Levi, which was to give undivided attention to duties of the sanctuary (Num. iii. 11-13). They had to guard tabernacle and temple, take charge of vessels, and encamp round the tabernacle to form a partition between it and the people. 4. *Nethinims*. As Levites, so these were *given* to help. A great increase of them when Gibeonites submitted (Jos. ix. 23); enlargement made by David (Ezra viii. 20). After return from captivity, their services most important on account of small number of Levites who returned (Ezra ii. 40). These classes set forth different kinds of Christian work. "In the work of the service," positions of trust and honour, duties lowly and menial, variety and unity. All appointed by God, calling forth ability and activity of man. "Who, then, is willing to consecrate himself?"

ABILITY FOR GOD'S SERVICE—*Verses 13-24.*

The return was a critical time, exposing to danger, requiring courage and physical strength. "Able men for the work of the service." This ability requires **I. Intelligence to understand the work.** It must be received as a divine appointment, "ordained in their set office" (ver. 22). No prosecution without comprehending its nature, design, and responsibilities. Porters and

overseers, confectioners and singers, must train and cultivate gifts and power to work. Be well informed in the science of duty and of God. "Take your wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." **II. Perseverance to prosecute the work.** They lodged all night (ver. 25); attended a week in turn (ver. 25); and were employed night and day. Many get tired, work half time, or leave entirely. The nobles bent not their necks to work, but Nehemiah *continued* at the wall (ch. v. 16). Steady, patient, faithful service acceptable to God. "*Continue* thou in the things which thou hast learned." "Pray and stay are two blessed monosyllables" [*Donne*].

ORDER IN GOD'S SERVICE.—Verses 23–34.

Extreme care taken to secure regularity and reverence in God's house. "Order is heaven's first law." **I. In the appointment of officers to rule.** Each his own place and authority. Priests at the altar, porters at the gate, and leaders in the choir. Times of duty and relief fixed. Many disorderly, unsympathetic, and fail. "For we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chr. xv. 13). **II. In the regular method of worship.** Variety but unity. In sacrifices to present, bread to lay out, and songs to arrange, "they waited on their office according to their order." Order gives cheerfulness, alacrity, and success. Disorder produces aversion, resistance, and failure. "Let all things be done decently and in order." "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. xiv. 33–40).

"The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall" [*Pope*].

PEDIGREE OF SAUL.—Verses 35–44.

To construct Saul's genealogy, compare various statements in Scriptures (*cf.* 1 Sam. ix. 1; xiv. 51; 1 Chr. vii. 6–8; viii. 29–33; ix. 35–39). In the choice, anointing, and pedigree of Saul, which enter the history of Israel, notice—1. *The 'condescension of God.* Both to human weakness, in asking a king, and to smallest and apparently trivial events in life. 2. *The sovereignty of God.* Independent of earthly and human relations. Saul not notable, from a prominent family; but unknown, "from the smallest family of the smallest of the tribes." 3. *The providence of God.* In preserving the record for the instruction of others. "How has God, the Holy Ghost, stooped to become a historian of the smallest, most contemptible affairs on earth, in order to reveal to man, in his own language, in his own business, in his own ways, the purposes, the secrets, and the ways of the Deity" [*Hamann*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. *Carried away.* 1. The sin. 2. The punishment. 3. The return, and 4. The restoration. Many remained in Babylon, others returned to possessions, privileges, and honour. This typical of spiritual conduct. "A wonderful providence that as the land

kept her Sabbaths for those seventy years, so the country should be all that while kept empty, till the return of the natives; for we read not that any colonies were sent thither, nor any displaced to make room for these at their return" [*Trapp*].

Ver. 13. *Very able men.* Men of *valour* or men of *work* for the service; in either sense we get *aptitude* or *fitness* for *service*, bodily, mentally, and spiritually. "Able ministers of the New Testament" (2 Cor. iii. 6; cf. Ep. iii. 7; 1 Tim. i. 11, 12).

Ver. 20. *Phineas*, highly favoured. 1. God's presence a mark of time. In individual life and national history. "The object of this verse is to mark the time to which the writer refers in the verse preceding" [*Speak. Com.*]. 2. God's presence the source of honour. "The ruler over them." 3. God's presence the source of success in effort. "The Lord was with him" in his action at Baal-peor (Num. xxv.).

Ver. 22. *Samuel the seer* a privileged person. One who receives dreams and visions, gets insight into divine revelation, and is consulted by the people. All teachers should be seers in opening the eyes and giving the

light and knowledge of God (2 Cor. iv. 6).

Ver. 26. *Doorkeepers.* 1. To open the doors of God's house every morning and shut them at night (ver. 27). 2. To keep off the unclean and hinder those from intruding who were forbidden by the law. 3. To direct and introduce into the courts those who came to worship and facilitate their safety and profit [cf. *Henry*]. This required *zeal*, to be there first; *patience*, to stay until the last; and *care*, to be exact and successful. A mean employment in the estimation of many. Nothing mean for God. "I would rather be a *doorkeeper* in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

"The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves—a road
To bring us daily nearer God" [*Keble*].

CHAPTER X.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The genealogical introduction now closed. Narrative in twenty chapters describes the reign of David. The first 12 verses in this chapter a second edition of 1 Sam. xxxi., with variations in diction and in facts, partly from brevity and an interval of five or six centuries.

Vers. 1-7.—*The death of Saul.* *Gilboa* on which Gideon triumphed (Judg. vii. 1-8). *Followed.* Hebrew implies that Saul was special object of pursuit. Ver. 2. "*Sons of S.*" without article: four altogether (cf. ix. 39). Ver. 3. *Wounded*, not dangerously, perhaps. "Some read he trembled before the archers," who *hit*, literally found, reached him in pursuing. Ver. 4. *Abuse me*, mock me. *Afraid* out of respect for royalty and in the same peril. Ver. 6. *House*, not whole family or all his sons, for Ishbosheth survived and succeeded him in portion of kingdom (2 Sam. ii. 8-16; iii. 6-15); but "all his household," or body of attendants in war.

Vers. 8-12.—*Treatment of remains.* *House* of Ashtaroth (1 Sam. xxxi. 16). Customary to deposit spoils of war in heathen temples. Ver. 10. *Head*, skull. *Dagon* (1 Sam. v. 2). This temple destroyed in time of Maccabees (1 Macc. x. 82-85). The headless egyptæ fixed to the wall of Beth-shan (1 Sam. xxxi. 10). Ver. 11. *Jab-gil*, moved by gratitude for former help (1 Sam. xi. 1-3). *Buried* the bones (after burning of the bodies, 1 Sam. xxxi. 12) under *oak* or *terebinth*, "the tree" or tamarisk in Samuel. The word in both places generic, different names from one root, refer to large variety of oaks [cf. *Dr. Thow., The Id. and Bk.*, pp. 243, 244].

Vers. 13, 14.—*Moral of Saul's death.* *Transgression* in sparing king of Amalchites (1 Sam. x. 8; xiii. 15); and in consulting a familiar spirit (1 Sam. xxviii.). Ver. 14. *Inquired* in form, not in right spirit. Impatient consultation considered by the writer as no inquiry at all.

HOMILETICS.

THE HEIGHTS OF GILBOA.—*Verses 1-6.*

Mount Gilboa a noted place in the lot of Issachar, "flanked by the Little Hermon ridge on north-east, and by Gilboa on south-east; a mountain range of ten miles long, about 600 feet high, and mentioned only in the melancholy connection of this history." **I. The important battle.** Philistines an old and inveterate enemy, more numerous, perhaps better led and better posted, began attack. Some think Saul had gone to consult the witch and left the camp. Israel ever exposed to a watchful foe. Christian life a conflict. When thrown off our guard and God forgotten, we are easily surrounded and overcome. **II. The disgraceful flight.** Best of troops put into disorder. The people of God chased by the enemy, and multitudes slain! How different from yore, when one put a thousand to flight! But when a people walk contrary to God, He will send a faintness into their hearts, and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth (Lev. xxvi. 23-36). **III. The pride of Israel slain.** Sad scenes on Gilboa's top! The chosen of God and the hero of Israel wounded by archers and falling upon his own sword! The king's sons, the bodyguard and the pride of his army, perish with him. "How are the mighty fallen!" Learn that one sinner not only destroyeth much good, but entails much suffering. 1. *Upon his own kindred.* Parents sin, and children suffer. Princes disobey, and their heirs are cut off. 2. *In society at large.* Not only the family, but the subjects of Saul suffered. How many homes, how many nations have been thrown into sorrow and deprived of their glory through sinful leaders! Achan perished not alone in his iniquity. "If ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

THE DEATH OF SAUL.—*Verses 3-7, 13, 14.*

The life and conduct of Saul full of incident, dramatic effect, and solemn warning. Learn—

I. That a splendid beginning may have an awful ending. Saul loved and elevated, called from obscurity to the service of his country; had gifts of body and mind; but opportunities lost, calling unfulfilled, and life a failure! "The *chosen* of the Lord" died a self-murderer! "All is well that ends well." **II. That divine judgments overtake men's sins.** "The Lord slew him." He had disobeyed law, defied the authority of Samuel; persisted in his self-will, and became the proud controller of his own life. Frightful to die in rebellion, to rush unbidden into God's presence, and become a monument of judgment! From Scripture, history, and moral law we learn that "God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness." **III. That in national calamities the godly suffer with the ungodly.** The sons, the family, and the dynasty of Saul suffered through his guilt. Sin is personal, but its consequences extensive and self-propagating. The innocent involved by the guilty. A father's conduct ruins the children; a monarch's government destroys the nation. If by the arrangements of society and by the law of influence we entail good or evil, let the ungodly beware and the righteous be faithful, "for none of us liveth to himself."

SCENES IN THE CAPITAL OF GATH.—*Verses 7-10.*

I. Tidings of the deaths of the royal family. When day after battle dawned, the Philistines found dead bodies of father and three sons.

Tidings told in capital of Gath and published in the streets of Ashkelon. **II. Welcome to the victorious army.** Daughters of accursed race rejoiced and welcomed back their victorious army. Retribution had come for the fall of their champion leader. **III. Trophies suspended in the temple of the gods.** This customary. "As head and sword of Goliath were carried off to the sanctuary, so head of Saul cut off and fastened to the temple of Dagon at Ashdod, and his arms—the spear on which he had so often rested, the sword and the famous bow of Jonathan—were sent round in festive processions to the Philistine cities, and finally deposited in the temple of Ashtaroth, in the Canaanitish city of Bethshan, hard by the fatal field. On the walls of the same city, overhanging the public place in front of the gates, were hung the stripped and dismembered corpses." A lasting memorial of Israel's ignominious defeat and subjugation.

THE DEVOTED CITY.—*Verses 11, 12.*

I. The patriotism of the city. In general defection trans-Jordanic towns loyal to the fallen house. Jabesh-gilead specially devoted. Concerned for the land defiled by exposure of dead bodies, and for the crown of Israel profaned by uncircumcised. **II. The zeal of the city.** Enthusiasm contagious. Seen—1. *In arming the people.* "All the valiant men arose." 2. *In a successful raid.* A long journey, a distance of about twelve miles; dangerous in the night, and by a narrow upland passage; guard surprised and bodies rescued. **III. The gratitude of the city.** All this in remembrance of services rendered by Saul against their enemies (1 Sam. xi. 1–13). Gratitude expressed—1. *In solemn funeral rites*; and 2. *In fasting and sorrow.* Rare to show gratitude to a fallen foe. This act commended by David (2 Sam. ii. 5), and mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq.* vi. 6, ch. xiv., sect. 8). Cherish the memory of past help; repay when opportunity comes, for come it will. You shall reap what you sow, a reward from God and man. "The Lord show kindness and truth unto you; and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing" (2 Sam. ii. 6).

SAUL'S TRANSGRESSION.—*Verse 11.*

I. He was a disobedient king. God's command definite: "Slay man and woman." Saul's conduct was partial, he spared Agag the king, and kept best of cattle (1 Sam. xvi. 1). Men never prosper who violate God's commands. Sooner or later punishment overtakes them. Adam, Balaam, Jonah. **II. He was an untruthful king.** "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Saul had a bad heart and a false tongue. He coveted Agar's wealth and Samuel's blessing. The bleating of sheep convicted the lying king. God will expose the untruthful Abraham, Ananias, &c. **III. He was a hypocritical king.** "The people spared the fattest of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord." When convicted of sin he blamed the people, but attributes their sin to a sacred motive. Hypocrisy adorns herself in the most attractive attire. One sin opens the gates for another. Disobedience leads to falsehood; falsehood to hypocrisy; hypocrisy to ruin. Bad men disqualify themselves for exalted positions. When kings refuse to obey God, he will cut them off. When great men fail, God appoints their successors. God can raise up men for the most arduous duties [*J. T. Woodhouse*].

THE LOST KINGDOM.—Verse 14.

I. Lost through sin. Disobedience, obstinate pride, and self-will. **II. Transferred by divine appointment.** “He turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse.” God overturns one and raises up another. Royalty no shelter against judgments, power no defence against heaven. “Thy kingdom shall not continue.” A proud man, elated by talent and success; a boasting church, a people glorying in wealth or wisdom, in anything but Christ, may soon be abased. God brings down the mighty from their seats and exalts the humble, “to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-7. *Battle against Saul*, who was—1. *Abandoned to despair*. “Sore afraid,” ver. 4, *i.e.*, he trembled, was frightened at archers. After scene of Endor might well fear. 2. *Failed in resources*. No prophet, no divine guidance, sorely wounded and unable to defend himself. A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Ver. 2. *Jonathan*. That peerless prince, the glory of chivalry, that *lumen et columen* of his country. He dieth among the rest, and hath his share as deep as any other in that common calamity; so true is that of Solomon, “There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked” (Ecc. ix. 1, 2); but God maketh them to differ (Mal. iii. 18), as the harvest-man cutteth down the good corn and the weeds together, but for a different purpose [*Trapp*].

Ver. 4. *Abuse me*, *i.e.*, my body, whereof he took more care than for his precious soul. A common fault. His body was abused nevertheless [*Trapp*].

Ver. 5. *Fell likewise*. Evil examples, especially of the great, never escaped imitation: the armour-bearer of Saul follows his master, and dares do that to himself which to his king he durst not [*Bp. Hall*]. *Fell* by Saul's evil example, and perhaps in love to him, as loth to outlive him whom he had held the joy of his heart, the breath of his nostrils. He had done better if he had died by the hand of the enemy, in his master's defence [*Trapp*].

Ver. 4. *Suicide as illustrated by the case of Saul*. I. Causes: 1. Not

merely accumulated misfortunes, but long-continued wrongdoing; 2. Cowardly fear of suffering (ver. 3), even in a man formerly brave; 3. Caring more for disgrace than for sin; 4. Abandonment of trust in God as to this life and the future life. II. Effects: 1. Others led by the example into the same folly and sin (ver. 5); 2. Personal dishonour not really prevented (vers. 4, 9, 10); 3. A crowning and lasting reproach to the man's memory [*Lange*].

Vers. 11, 12. *Exploit of men of Jabesh-gilead*. 1. It was a brave deed; 2. A patriotic deed; 3. A grateful deed (ch. xi.); 4. But the bravery, patriotism, and gratitude had been better shown before Saul's death by helping him (which they do not appear to have done). Honours after death make poor amends for neglect and unfaithfulness during life; 5. And care of the poor remains could avail little for the man's reputation in this world, and nothing for his repose in eternity [*Lange*].

Ver. 13. *A familiar spirit*. He turned aside (1 Sam. xii. 20), indicating not only *external* defection in non-fulfilment of the word, but *internal*, a falling away in fellowship and walk with God, was not subject to God's will and word. Learn—1. *The possibility that a man may fall from spiritual communion with the divine and invisible*. “God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams.” 2. *The rapidity with which a man may fall from the highest eminence*. “Because thou

obeyedst not, therefore hath the Lord done this thing." 3. *The certainty that one day the impenitent will want their*

old teachers. "Bring me up Samuel" [*City Temple*, vol. i.].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER X.

Ver. 6. *Saul died.* There is not in sacred history, or in any other, a character more melancholy to contemplate than that of Saul. Naturally humble and modest, though of strong passions, he might have adorned a private station. In circumstances which did not expose him to temptation, he would probably have acted virtuously. But his natural rashness was controlled neither by a powerful understanding nor a scrupulous conscience, and the obligations of duty and the ties of gratitude, always felt by him too slightly, were totally disregarded when ambition, envy, and jealousy had taken possession of his mind. The diabolical nature of these passions is seen, with frightful distinctness, in Saul, whom their indulgence transformed into an unnatural monster, who constantly exhibited the

moral infatuation so common among those who have abandoned themselves to sin, of thinking that the punishment of one crime may be escaped by the perpetration of another. In him also is seen the moral anomaly or contradiction which would be incredible did we not often witness it, of an individual pursuing habitually a course which his better nature pronounces not only flagitious, but insane (1 Sam. xxiv. 16-22). Saul knew that the person should be king whom he persisted in seeking to destroy, and so accelerated his own ruin [*Kitto*].

Ver. 14. *Turned.* Because of unrighteous dealings, the kingdom is turned from one people to another (Eclus. x. 8).

"Kings then at last have but the lot of all. By their own conduct they must stand or fall" [*Cowper*].

CHAPTER XI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The writer here passes by the 7½ years of David's reign over Judah, at which he had glanced in his introductory section (chap. iii. 4), and hastens to the glorious period of his inauguration as king over the whole people of Israel. This, as we learn from 2 Sam. iv. 5, was at the death of Ish-bosheth, who succeeded Saul as king over all the tribes, except that of Judah [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-1.—*David made king.* Hebron, chap. iii. 4, an ancient royal and priestly city (Jos. xii. 10; xxi. 11); most mountainous, safest part of Judah, and divinely selected (2 Sam. ii. 1). Ver. 3. *Covenant*, "league" (2 Sam. v. 3). *By Samuel* (cf. ver. 10), added by writer to mark divine origin of Davidic Monarchy, which he had not previously declared [cf. *Speak. Com.*].—covenant, a solemn transaction before the Lord, united monarch and people in terms of government and obedience.

Vers. 4-9.—*Zion taken from Jebusites.* *Jebuz* (cf. Josh. xv. 8; Judg. xix. 10). Ver. 5. *Said* abbreviates; full speech 2 Sam. v. 6. *Zion* mentioned first in 2 Sam. v. 7, meaning lofty, bare, rocky top, exposed to sun; Heb. a fortified place. *City* extended northward and southward; the royal residence and stronghold. Ver. 6. *Chief* head of government. *Captain* command of army. Prowess of Joab on this occasion, and the part which he took in building city of David, known only from this passage—*repaired* breaches made in siege, rebuilt houses, demolished and reconstructed old part of city occupied by Jebus. David built a new town.

Ver. 9.—*Ward.* Literally, "went on and grew great," as 2 Sam. v. 10. *Hosts.* Sept., the Lord Omnipotent.

Vers. 10-47.—*David's mighty men* (2 Sam. xxiii. 8-39). *Strengthened*, exerted themselves; "assisted with all Israel in making David king"—margin, "held fast with him" in affection and obedience. *Ver. 11. Number.* In Hebrew a plural pronoun ("these") and a singular noun. Moreover, the *number* not given; therefore read, "These are the names" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Jash.*, called son of Zabdiel (ch. xxvii. 2); hence grandson of Hachmoni (*cf.* ch. xxvii. 32). *Three*, 800 in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. One or other of these corrupt [*Speak. Com.*]. Some suppose he attacked 800 and slew 300 of them. *Ver. 12. Eleazar* and Jashobeam only two here; Shammah third in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11. *Ver. 13. Pas.* Place where Goliath slain, between Shoehoh and Azekah (1 Sam. xvii. 1). *Ver. 14. Parcel.* This achievement given in detail (2 Sam. xxiii. 9-11). Eleazar had given up from fatigue, and then Shammah helped by his prowess to keep the field. These feats performed when David acted as general of Saul against Philistines. *Vers. 15-19.* Feat of three men of the thirty mentioned in *vers. 26-40. Rock* (*cf.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 13). *Ver. 17. Well* (2 Sam. xxiii. 15-17). This feat performed by a second three, Abishai chief (*ver. 20*); not the three in *vers. 15-19. Ver. 21. Hon.*, yet not on a par with first three. *Ver. 22. Kab.* South of Judah (Jos. xv. 21; Neh. xi. 25). *Many*, three daring deeds given as specimens. *Lionlike*, two Ariels; literally, lions of God, great lions, or champions in David's war with Moab (2 Sam. viii. 2). *Ver. 23. Stature*, *i.e.*, measure, aspect, conspicuous for size. *Ver. 24. Three mighties.* The second three, of whom Benaiah held second place. *Ver. 25. Guard.* Ges. gives "David took him into his privy council," as margin of 2 Sam. xxiii. 23. He was captain over Kerethi and Pelethi, a body-guard of the king. *Vers. 26-47. The 48 men of war.* "Valiant men of the armies" (*cf.* list in 2 Sam. xxiii. 21-35). *Asahel* (2 Sam. ii. 18). *Ver. 27. Haroite, Harodite*, a native of Harod (Jud. vii. 1). *Helez* "the Paltite." *Ver. 28. Tekoite* of Tekoa (2 Sam. xiv. 2). *Anthothite*, of Anathoth (Jos. xxi. 18). *Ver. 29. Sib.*, Mebunnai in Sam. *Iai, Zaimon.* *Ver. 30. Mah.*, chief of detachment of guards (ch. xxvii. 13). *Ver. 39. Nah.*, armour-bearer to Joab. *Vers. 41-47.* These sixteen are a supplement to Samuel. *Uriah*, well known (2 Sam. xi.); the others associated with places unknown, or connected with cities and districts on east of Jordan.

HOMILETICS.

THE CHOSEN KING.—*Verses 1-4.*

After the death of Saul, country on east of Jordan, and in short time west also, with exception of province of Judah, over which David ruled in Hebron, was brought, by skilful generalship of Abner, to acknowledge Ishbosheth as king (2 Sam. ii. 8 *seq.*). Not till Abner and Ishbosheth were dead, and no one left belonging to house of Saul, but lame Meribosheth, who was then only twelve years old, that all the Israelites resolved to make David king. These verses an account of the assembly in which the resolution was carried into effect [*Keil*].

I. The reasons for the choice of a king. Not a rash, blind, and imprudent choice. 1. *Blood relationship.* "We are thy bone and thy flesh." Close and affectionate relationship, which ensured deep interest and patriotism. 2. *Military leadership.* "Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in." Past services of value, who so likely in future to rule? Qualifications for leadership, inborn, called out by circumstances and cultured under a sense of responsibility. Prove men before you choose them for office. "Let these also first be proved." 3. *Divine appointment.* "The Lord thy God said." Samuel the seer, who anointed Saul, nominated his successor. David often designated, now chosen by the nation. Trial and patient waiting now rewarded. Time fulfilled, all things ready, and "they anointed David king over Israel according to the word of the Lord." **II. The duties of the chosen king.** "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, &c." This first time, the king called pastor. The servant described as the master; the under-shepherd's duty like that of chief-shepherd. 1. *To rule.* Not in pride and tyranny, but in love and humility; respecting liberty, property, and human life. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3). 2. *To feed.* The true king a real shepherd to his people, watching over their interests, providing

for them and defending them. This picture of a theocratic king invested with moral grandeur; should be copied by every servant of God, high or low in position; but only completely realised in Messiah. "A Governor who shall rule (shepherd) my people Israel" (Matt. ii. 6). **III. The allegiance given to the chosen king.** All Israel were assembled, united and represented by elders. For once *vox populi vox Dei*. In this ceremony king reminded of solemn responsibility and people of implicit obedience. In form a *covenant*, mutual agreement on both sides to be true and helpful one to another. Notice—1. *Unity in the covenant.* The unity introduced by Samuel, weakened by Saul, restored internally and externally on the theocratic basis. "All Israel" represented in the choice. 2. *Loyalty in the covenant.* Attachment to the person of the king, adhesion to his cause and determination to obey his word. Service is poor and cold in warmest subject without the glow of loyalty. Our Master deserves and seeks it in every servant. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." 3. *Solemnity in the covenant.* "Before the Lord," acting in his sight. People and king jointly render unconditional obedience to the Invisible Ruler. "King David made a league with them before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel" (2 Sam. v. 3).

THE CAPTURE OF THE STRONGHOLD.—Verses 5-9.

David now begins to act, seeks to establish his throne, and subdue his enemies. Zion the centre, chief stronghold, and boast of the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6). **I. The taking of the city.** The south and middle of Palestine unsafe, as long as this citadel unconquered. Its siege and capture a daring act. 1. *Taken against great opposition.* Its *natural position* very strong. Built on a precipice, waterfalls and gorges round about. Thought to be impregnable. "David cannot come in hither." Its *defenders* very courageous. Quarters very close; a matter of life or death; but except the Lord keep the city, builders and watchmen in vain. 2. *Taken by personal valour.* Joab scaled the rocks, led the assault, and captured the city. For this act of bravery he was promoted, confirmed in position, and increased in influence. 3. *Taken in God's strength.* Valour, numbers, and resources avail not without this. Victory only when God vouchsafes it. "All this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. xvii. 47). **II. The repairing of the city.** "David built round about from the Millo (the mound) and inward" (2 Sam. v. 9); and "Joab restored (revived) the rest of the city" (*cf.* Neh. iii. 31). Houses restored, fortifications reared, rebuilding regarded as restoration to life. No longer a dry, barren rock, but a place of beauty and strength. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." **III. The royal residence in the city.** David took up his abode, "therefore it is called the *City of David*." It becomes the seat of government, the centre of festivities, the memorial of its founder's name. Mount Zion becomes "the city of the great king," a type of the royal seat and the dominion of Messiah. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

DAVID'S PROSPERITY.—Verse 9.

The words, *then David went, &c.*, indicate the point of time from which his becoming great first dates; *then* (from the conquest of Jerusalem) David *became continually greater and greater* [*Keil*]. Learn—**I. God is the true source of prosperity.** "The Lord of Hosts was with him." Not fleets and armies, skill of captains and valour of soldiers; but from presence of God. "Ascribe

(by word and conduct, give) ye greatness unto our God" (Deut. xxxii. 3). "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty." **II. God determines the real nature of prosperity.** Temporal, spiritual, or both. Regal qualities, prudent counsellors, faithful friends, and devoted subjects; crowns, capitals, and thrones; personal influence, religious privileges, gifts of any kind, progress of any degree, bestowed by God. **III. God fixes the exact time of prosperity.** From conquest of Zion a turning-point in David's fortunes. His life a series of successive stages and positions in which one prepared for the other. "Even when Saul was king, David led out and brought in Israel." After he was anointed, "he waxed greater and greater," "went on growing and growing." Our life's work fashioned by God, not by ourselves, may be long time and go through strange discipline in its attainment; but God appoints means and fixes seasons. "My times are in Thy hands." Use the means, wait in faith and seek the aid of God for progress and position here and hereafter.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. *Then.* 1. Great honours often preceded by great trials. Through suffering to glory. **II.** Great trials often end with unexpected relief; or, 1. Men divinely designated, specially trained for position. 2. When specially trained, God's providence fulfils God's word in placing them in position. 3. When so placed by God's providence, often an epoch in their own, and a blessing in history of others. *Feed my people.* The shepherd king. Evil rulers termed roaring lions, devouring wolves, &c. (Ezek. xix. 2). Teachers and prophets pastors of people (Ezek. xxxiv. 23), to feed "by procuring for them the wholesome food of the word, by going before them in good example, by driving away the wolf, by tending them, and tendering their good every way" [Trapp].

Ver. 3. *David king.* How he reached the throne. 1. By aspiring to it only because divinely appointed. 2. By deserving it (a) in what he did;

(b) in what he refused to do. 3. By waiting for it: (a) continuing patient through a long course of trials; (b) using all lawful means in his power to gain it (e.g., 2 Sam. ii. 5; iii. 20-36); (c) preparing for it consciously and unconsciously; learning how to rule men, and to overcome difficulties [Lange].

Ver. 5. *The Castle of Zion.* Like the human heart, harder to take and keep for Christ than Khartoum. Pride, selfishness, and envy must be driven out. Like heaven, only gained by violence (Matt. xi. 12), and under the leadership of the Captain of salvation. *David dwelt* (ver. 7). A type of Christ, who subdueth all our enemies, and openeth unto us the heavenly Jerusalem [Trapp]. Ver. 8. *Job repaired.* Heb. revived *vivificavit vel sanavit*, as 2 Chron. xxiv. 13. *City of David*, as Constantine called Bizantium Constantinople after his own name; making it also the metropolis and seat of the empire [Trapp].

HOMILETICS.

FAMOUS EXPLOITS.—Verses 10-47.

These are the heads, chiefs of David's heroes, heroes among heroes, attached to his person, with whom he carried on *the Lord's war*, and whose deeds are "works" of "great deliverance." **I. The two mighties** (ver. 10-14). The third, Shammah (2 Sam. xxiii. 11), not given here. 1. *Exploit of Jashobeam* (ver. 11). Chief of captains, riders (or knights, Sam.), bodyguard of king. *He lifted up*, brandished his spear time after time in strength and courage, and

slew 300. In Sam. 800 given—attacked 800 and slew 300, or slew 300 at one time and 800 at another. 2. *Exploit of Eleazar*. A fugitive in the wilderness with David. (a) Stood when others fled in fear and disgrace. (b) Weary, yet would not quit the work; hand cramped round hilt of sword, but held the weapon. Faint, yet pursuing (Judg. viii. 4). (c) Advantage followed up, and victory gained. "A great victory that day." Heb. in theocratic form of *deliverance, selection* from God. Aided by Shammah ("they set themselves") the parcel of ground preserved. (d) Then people returned for spoil and share honour. Many quit the field in danger, and hasten back for gain, willing to share the victory, not the fight. The men of Ephraim (Judg. viii. 1). **II. The three captains** (vers. 15–19). 1. *The chivalrous act they performed* evinces enthusiasm and readiness for humblest wish of the king. (1) *A dangerous act*. To force passage through garrison of the enemy at risk of life. (2) *A brave act*. Fearless of results, glad to defy Philistines, and ambitious to serve their king. Be you ready, like Jesus, to comply with every intimation of God by his word and providence. (3) *An unselfish act*. No thought for themselves, all for their sovereign and their fellows. (4) *A loyal act*. Indicative of affection and loyalty. No command, no request; perhaps a wish *overheard*, and they spring into action. Service free and spontaneous, not pressed nor constrained. First a willing mind, then it is accepted to what we can do. 2. *The generous estimation of the act*. The water refused, gained at peril of life, and too sacred to gratify a wish foolishly expressed. *Poured it out* as a libation (Gen. xxxv. 11; Ex. xxx. 9; Judg. vi. 20). A practical acknowledgment of his error; an expression of sympathy with the bravery and devotion of the men; a check to impulse and rashness in future. The sacrifice to God of what we most desire gives the strength and earnest of future success. **III. The second couple** (vers. 20–25). 1. *Abishai*, "a man of repute," had a name, and renowned for valour; held high position, chief leader of his company; slew 300; but was excelled in heroic conduct by the three in vers. 11–14. 2. *Benaiah*, a valiant man, accustomed to danger, "had done many acts" (great of acts, lit.); commander of bodyguard (marg., privy councillor). (a) Slew three heroes. An *Egyptian*, terrible in height and appearance, well armed; thus displayed courage (only a *staff*), dexterity, strength, and skill by snatching the spear out of the giant's hand and killing him with it (David and Goliath). Slew *two lion-like men*, "two sons of Ariel of Moab" [*Keil*]. Ariel a title of honour given to King of Moab. A feat performed probably in war between David and Moabites (2 Sam. viii. 2). (b) *Slew a lion* (ver. 22), "probably in a cave in which he took refuge from a snowstorm, and in which a savage lion would have its lair. This far greater achievement than if the monster had been previously snared in a pit." *On a snowy day*, when greater courage and hardship would be required. Benaiah's influence and fidelity known in Solomon's time (1 Kings i. 8, 10, 44). 3. *Ashael*, chief of men historically unknown (2 Sam. xxiii. 24); captain of 4th division (xxvii. 7); slain by Abner (2 Sam. ii.). After him, names in Samuel are thirty, and one over Uriah the Hittite. Some of the list are Gentiles, who cast their lot with Israel, and reminds of that service in which is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free, but all one.

DAVID'S CONDUCT IN REFUSING TO DRINK.—Verse 19.

I. An act of great unselfishness. Thought of others, not himself; appreciated the deed of the noble three, and felt that he had no right to claim the blood of others. Men do not exist for us, but we exist for them. Sir P. Sidney took the cup from his thirsty lips to give to the poor. **II. An expression of profound humility.** He bowed before the Lord, laid the cup at his feet, through whom it was gained and to whom it belonged. None

so fit to rule as those who stoop. "Before honour is humility." **III. An estimate of the value of human life.** Great regard for the worth of men. Soldiers not made for powder and shot. Blood, sacred and inestimable. Human life an opportunity, a power for service, must not be thrown away. Wellington valued the life of his men. "Of every man will I require the life of man." Life is

"No trifle, however short it seem;
And howsoever shadowy, no dream;
Its value what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain" [*Cowper*].

TRUE HEROISM.—Verses 10–17.

I. In its real nature. Not mere physical vigour and exuberant spirit. Not foolhardiness nor reckless waste of strength and life, but self-sacrificing love, which shuns no duty and braves all danger. Often seen in forbearance, in provocation, patience, in trial, tenderness towards others, and self-control in adversity and prosperity. It is the stuff of which martyrs are made, who refuse wealth, honours, and applause for conscience sake. Seen in Eliot—"Lion Eliot, that great Englishman"—who refused the bribes and defied the tyranny of Charles I.; in Savonarola, the Italian monk, "a Reformer before the Reformation"; in Luther, before the Diet at Worms; and in all "brave men of old."

II. In its hidden source. Love to God, "strengthened themselves with him" (ver. 10). Acquaintance with David, loyalty to him prompted to arms and conflict. Great men attract and excite to enthusiasm. King Arthur had his knights, Cromwell his Ironsides, and David his heroes. Jesus Christ has followers devoted to him, led to victory by him. "Through God we shall do valiantly."

III. In its noble achievements. Enterprises full of risks; leading a forlorn hope; a successful skirmish; a dashing charge and a splendid capture. In our hearts and lives, in the Christian church and the world, what have we done for God? "Quit yourselves like men."

"Let us go forth, and resolutely dare
With sweat of brow to toil our little day" [*Lord Houghton*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 15. *Cave of Adullam*. 1. A place of exile. 2. A centre of attraction—"a great host, as the host of God," gathers round David. 3. A picture of Christ's reign. Rejected, yet gathering those in spiritual debt and distress unto himself. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was bitter of soul, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them."

Ver. 41. *Uriah the Hittite* (2 Sam. ii. 3). The mention of this name in list suggests (1) a man of distinguished merit; (2) an aggravation of David's guilt towards him. He was a foreigner, a Hittite. But his name and manner of speech indicate that he adopted the Jewish religion.

Happy the people that has heroes who (1) advance in God's strength, (2) courageously stake their life for God's honour and the people's welfare, and (3) are counted worthy by God to work great deliverance for their people.

Hail to the throne that is encompassed by heroes who (1) find their highest nobility in the real knighthood that roots itself in the true fear of God, (2) with humble heroism defend altar and throne, (3) seek their highest honour in being God's instruments for the aims of his kingdom and for the revelation of his power and righteousness, and (4) set the whole people an example of self-devoting love and fidelity and of unterrified courage [*Lange*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 4-8. During the wars of Nassau a council of officers debated whether to attack a certain town. A Dutch general had so much to say about the formidable guns mounted on the defences of the place that many grew discouraged and advised giving up the dangerous job. "My lords," said Sir Horace Vere, a stout English baron, "if you fear the mouth of a cannon you must never come into the field." Without the Christian's courage it is useless to enter the Christian's fight.

Ver. 11. *Lifted up*. "Courage mounteth with occasion" [*Shakespeare*].

'Do not for one repulse forego the purpose That you resolve to effect.'

Ver. 18. *Brake through the host*.

"He holds no parley with unmanly fears;
Where duty bids, he confidently steers;
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them
all" [*Cowper*].

Ver. 19. *God forbid*. That which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a low order of man—that which constitutes human goodness, human nobleness—is surely not the degree of enlightenment with which men pursue their own advantage; but it is self-forgetfulness, it is self-sacrifice, it is the disregard of personal pleasure and personal indulgence, personal advantages remote or present [*Troude*].

CHAPTER XII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter entirely new matter—supplementary to Samuel—contains a list of those who joined David in time of Saul (vers. 1-22), and of those who came to make him king over Israel (vers. 23-40).

Vers. 1-7.—*Benjamin and Judah came to Ziklag*. A town which belonged to Simeon (Jos. xix. 5), but given to David for residence it fell to Judah. *Close*, hidden (cf. 1 Sam. xxvii. 30). *Brethren*, i.e., Benjamites, i.e., members of the same tribe; disgusted with his treatment of David or persuaded that God was with him. Ver. 3. *Azmar*. (viii. 13, 30; xi. 33). Ver. 4. *Geder*. (Jos. xv. 36). Ver. 5. *The Haraphs*, sons of Hariph (Neh. vii. 24), probably Benjamites. Ver. 6. *Korahites*, not of tribe of Levi, but descendants of some Korah of Judah. Ver. 7. *Gedor* (ch. iv. 4).

Vers. 8-15.—*Gadites aided David*. *Hold*, cave of Adullam, or a fort in wilderness of Judah (1 Sam. xxii. 5); *faces* (cf. 2 Sam. i. 2, 3; ii. 18); *buckler*, lance or spear (ver. 24). Ver. 15. *Jordan*, to help brethren (cf. Jos. iii. 15), *first month*, in spring, when river is swollen; *valleys*, literally all the valley on both sides Jordan. Ver. 14. *Ozer*, equal to (as in margin).

Vers. 16-18.—*Men of Judah and Benjamin*. Ver. 17. *Meet*. David reason to suspect perhaps, feared treachery and required a solemn declaration. Ver. 18. *Came upon*, literally clothed. A. spoke not of himself, but as the Spirit of God prompted him.

Vers. 19-22.—*Men of Maussish*. Seven are given who joined David, when dismissed by Philistines from their army (cf. 1 Sam. xxix. 1-11). Ver. 21. *Band*, the troop of Amalek (1 Sam. xxx. 8), which sacked Ziklag during absence of David. Ver. 22. *Host of God*, a formula for great things.

Vers. 23-40.—*Different tribes who attended and made David king at Hebron*. Vers. 24, 25. Judah and Simeon, two southern tribes, had already acknowledged David. Vers. 26-28. Many of the Levites closely associated with these tribes. *Jehoiada*, father of Benaiah (xi. 22); *leader*, commander of priestly troops. *Zadok* became high-priest at a later time (2 Sam. viii. 17; 1 Kings i. 8). Ver. 29. Benjamites few, for greater part still in service of Saul's house. Ver. 30. *Famous*, men of name or renown. Ver. 31. *Expressed*, i.e., nominated and deputed by the rest of the tribe to go to Hebron and make David king [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 32. *Understanding*, best interpreted politically (Esth. i. 13) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 33. *Not of double heart*, falling into rank not with double heart, i.e., with firm and faithful mind. Naphtali decided, Dan in full strength, and Asher in great force. Ver. 37. A large contingent from eastern tribes.

Vers. 38-40.—Great majority enthusiastic, *agreed in heart*, i.e., had a common wish (2 Chr. xxx. 12) to make David king. Ver. 40. Tribes, near and distant, brought provisions on beasts of burden; every one made it a festival of joy.

HOMILETICS.

THE ASSEMBLY AT ZIKLAG.—Verses 1-22.

These joined David in the time of Saul, were early helpers in the time of exile and danger.

I. The ingenious tribe (vers. 1-7). Benjamites, Saul's kinspeople, and for some reason not satisfied with his rule. Several leading men given. Men of great dexterity. 1. *Skilful archers*. "Shooting arrows out of a bow." 2. *Famous slingers*. "Hurling stones." 3. *Well disciplined*. Active and wonderful in "use of right hand and left." **II. The courageous tribe** (vers. 8-14). Gadites. 1. *Able-bodied*. "Men of might and men of war fit for battle." 2. *Specially trained*. "Could handle shield and buckler." 3. *Remarkably fleet*. "Swift as the roes upon the mountains," not in flying from the foe, but in pursuing, so that none escaped. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, &c." (2 Sam. xxii. 34; Hab. iii. 19). 4. *Splendidly courageous*. (a) They went over Jordan in time of floods. (b) They put to flight the people of the valley. 5. *Avfully determined*. "Whose faces were like the faces of lions." Saul and Jonathan "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions" (2 Sam. i. 23). **III. The suspected tribes** (vers. 16-18). Some of Benjamin and Judah. Benjamites probably invited Judahites to go with them to prevent suspicion; their anticipations well founded, as seen by results. David thought they were secret emissaries of Cush (Ps. vii. inscription), but soon persuaded otherwise, by (a) their entire submission, "Thine are we David and on thy side;" (b) their earnest prayer for his success, "Peace be unto thee." **IV. The volunteer tribe** (vers. 19-22). These "fell" not by lot, but by desertion from one to another. These persons left the service of Saul for that of David. Transfer allegiance from a bad to a good master, from a losing to a winning cause. Nothing else known of these seven captains. But one noble act may immortalise.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Saul's brethren. Some akin to Saul came over to David. 1. A testimony to unblemished character. 2. A protest against grievous wrong (done to David). 3. A determination to share the fortunes of the king. "It is God who worketh men's hearts and fashioneth their opinions. Paul had friends in Nero's court, and Luther in the Pope's" [*Trapp*].

Ver. 2. *Both right hand and left*. The word "*left-handed*" (in Septuagint) in Judges iii. 15 is rendered *both-handed*. 1. Some are *left-handed*, weak and awkward in every good work. 2. Others are *right-handed*, active, but single-handed after all. 3. *Both hands* required. Head, hands, heart, and all for Christ. "Both hands earnestly" for good, not for evil.

"Take my hands; and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love."

Ver. 8. *Separated themselves*. 1. From what connections? Service of Saul and other Gadites who remained with him. 2. For what purpose? To serve David, the anointed king. 3. At what time? When David was in distress and danger. We must come out of the world, separate from evil company, and never be ashamed of Christ and his cause. Thus shall we be renowned and registered with his people.

Vers. 17, 18. Notice—I. *The earnest appeal*. 1. In its spirit. He does not imprecate nor condemn. 2. In its purpose. What are you come for, peace or war? 3. In its requirement. Loyalty to me. II. *The grounds of the appeal*. 1. Their intimate relation. Both parties descended from the same ancestors and dependent upon the same God. "The God of our fathers."

2. His solemn declaration of innocence. "Seeing there is no wrong in mine hands." 3. His reliance upon divine interposition. An appeal to God as righteous and omniscient judge to rebuke, avenge, and help. III. *The response to the appeal.* Amasai gave a beautiful, prompt, and earnest reply.

1. In unconditional submission to the king. "Thine, David." 2. In sincere pledge of their services. "With thee, son of Jesse." 3. In wishing success to his cause. "Peace to thee," everything thy heart desires. "Peace to thy helpers," among whom we wish to be numbered. 4. In assurance of divine help. "For thy God helpeth thee." IV. *The results of the appeal.* When David saw the passionate earnestness and the loyal surrender—1. He received them heartily. "Then David received them." 2. He trustfully promotes them. "And made them captains of the band." Submit to God, follow him implicitly, and you shall be promoted to honour.

Vers. 14, 15. *Sons of Gad. Honourable mention.* 1. High in command.

"Captains of the host." 2. Physically strong. "Least could resist an hundred, &c." (*cf.* margin and Lev. xxvi. 8). 3. Brave in danger. Exploit well known in crossing Jordan, only needed simple allusion. 4. Victorious in fight. They overcame all in the valleys, east and west of the river.

"I sing the warrior and his mighty deeds." Ver. 18. *The spirit came upon* (clothed) *Amasai.* An unusual expression. We hear constantly in O.T. of "the Spirit of God," but only here (and possibly in 1 Chr. xxviii. 12) of "the Spirit" absolutely. Clear, however, the two expressions mean the same (*cf.* Jud. vi. 34 and 2 Chr. xxiv. 20). A. spoke not of himself, but as God's spiritual influence moved him [*Speak. Com.*]. The need of the Holy Spirit to submit to Christ and recognise him king—to preach his word and carry on his cause. Tarry until ye be endued (clothed) with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49).

"Angels give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say."

HOMILETICS.

THE HOST OF GOD.—Verse 22.

In distress David had few friends, 600 who served as guards. When he had to act for God many were disposed to help from different tribes. All welcome. So the army grew "like the host of God," great in numbers, valour, and success.

I. Animated by the presence of God. David counted for something. "How many do you reckon me?" said a leader to his fainting soldiers. What inspiration and strength to have "the Captain of salvation" with the Church! Wellington, one day in battle, rode into the midst of his wavering men. One who saw him cried, "There's the Duke; God bless him!" Then followed a tremendous cheer, and the tide was turned. "I am with you always." **II. Increased by the grace of God.** God only makes "willing in the day of power" (Ps. cx. 3); the power of his Spirit and word. Numbers not always increase and efficiency. Many desert or weaken the cause. Grace adds such as are being saved (Acts ii. 47). "The Lord make his people a hundred times so many more as they be." **III. Successful through the help of God.**

1. *In gathering numbers.* Confederates came to David in successive bands "day by day," as emergencies required. A gradual, constant accession, incessant progress in the army and cause of Christ. 2. *In gaining victories.* Everything possible to David's captains, counsellors, and friends. "Men of might and men of war." In service of God warriors numerous as dewdrops of the morning; strong in the strength of the Lord of Hosts; certain to overpower all opposition. "There is no disputing," said one to Cæsar, "with him that commands legions."

“For the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.”

THE ASSEMBLY AT HEBRON.—Verses 23–40.

This was seven years after Saul's death. “They should have come sooner,” says Trapp; “but better late than never.” Briefly classify and describe different tribes. 1. Judah, *the equipped tribe*. “Ready armed” (ver. 24); expecting and prepared to fight. Though fewer than others, they entertained those from afar. “Given to hospitality.” 2. Simeon, *the tribe of valour*. “Mighty men of valour for the war” (ver. 25). 3. The Levites, *the priestly tribe* (vers. 26–28). Earnest, led by famous men and recognised the providence of God in call of David. “Priestly troops” required now to fight and to pray. 4. Benjamites, *the tribe small in number*. Affection for their kin and jealousy for their honour kept many in army of Saul. All must be left for Christ. “Kindred should never over-rule conscience.” 5. Ephraim, *the renowned tribe*. “Famous throughout the house of their fathers” (ver. 30). 6. Manasseh, *the deputed tribe*. “Expressed by name” (ver. 31). “Deputed by the rest of the tribe to represent them” [*Speak. Com.*]. 7. Issachar, *the intelligent tribe* (ver. 32). (1) *Men of political sagacity*. “Had understanding of the times.” No longer “a strong ass” (Gen. xlix. 14). (2) *Men of insight*. Knew “what Israel ought to do” in their critical condition. (3) *Men of authority*. For “all their brethren were at their command.” Some knew how to rule and the rest how to obey. 8. Zebulun, *the enthusiastic tribe* (ver. 33). (1) *Sincere in heart*. “Not of double heart,” not of doubtful and divided mind. (2) *Fixed in purpose*. Not of distracted mind, divided purpose, and half a heart; but *one* in effort and interest. (3) *United in discipline*. They “could keep rank,” in the march and on the field. Ever obedient to command and united with the companies. 9. Other tribes are given (vers. 34–37). Naphtali very decided (ver. 34). Dan in great strength (ver. 35). Asher expert, able to marshal war (ver. 36). Eastern tribes grouped together, make a large contingent and well-equipped (ver. 37). Thus came friends and adherents, to make David king and render loyal obedience to him.

FITNESS FOR THE SERVICE OF THE GREAT KING.

Each tribe noted for some special quality. Sum all up and describe qualifications needful in God's service. **I. Intelligence is required.** Knowledge enough for personal salvation and for communication. Ignorance is unfitness and must never be excused. Knowledge must be the mind's nutriment, “*vigour of mind*,” must become wisdom and power in action. Many generals opposed to Napoleon were acquainted with military science, but he excelled where victory depended upon wise movement and sudden thought. We must understand the times in which we live and the duties we have to perform. **II. Courage is required.** “Woe be to fearful hearts and faint hands,” says the son of Sirach. A stout heart a great blessing. Cheering to see men in humble life and public conflict suffering in patience and triumphing in their integrity. Instances of courage in daily life and fields of action. “The heroic example of other days is in a great part the source of the courage of each generation; and men walk up composedly to the most perilous enterprises, beckoned onwards by the shades of the brave that were” [*Helps*]. “Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.” **III. Unity is required.** Divided counsel leads to broken ranks. Party spirit and envy will frustrate design. Rank must be kept in Christian efforts and co-operation

given in national interests. "United we stand," broken we are scattered from the field. Tacitus said of Germans what the world says of Christians, "Whilst fighting separately, all are conquered together." "One *body*, one *spirit*." **IV. Enthusiasm is required.** This makes up for lack in numbers and weapons. Ardour is a help in life, a useful and energetic motive-power. How often does it cool down by time, get repressed by toil and sneers! To succeed, enthusiasm must be contagious in our ranks and never die out. "Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm" [*Emerson*]. "Stir up (blow up, keep alive, as a dull fire) the gift of God within thee" (2 Tim. i. 6). Thus are we to qualify and equip ourselves for the warfare of life. "Men of understanding," "mighty men of valour," and "ready armed;" unity, spiritual sagacity and enthusiasm, all needful in leaders of tribes and soldiers of the "host of God."

THE PROPRIETY OF CONSIDERING TIMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES.—*Verse 32.*

From the character here given of the men of Issachar we shall take occasion to show—I. That our conduct must often be affected by times and circumstances of whatever nature. 1, Civil; 2, Social; 3, Personal. But your conduct must be influenced by them in temporal matters. There is still reason to inquire—II. How far it may be properly affected by them in the concerns of religion. 1. That we may attend to times, &c., is certain (example of Christ and apostles). 2. But how far is not easy to determine. III. What there is in the times, &c., of the present day to affect our conduct. Application: suggest a caution or two. 1. Guard against yielding to any corrupt bias. 2. The future judgment will be according to motives. 3. Seek for wisdom that is profitable to direct [*C. Simeon, M.A.*].

THE JOYOUS ENTERTAINMENT.—*Verses 38-40.*

Supplies of provisions furnished in abundance by neighbours and others from distant parts. All enthusiastic for David, and wished to feast on a liberal and magnificent scale worthy of the occasion. **I. The cause of joy.** Three reasons for it. 1. *United under one king.* End of divided rule. Prospect of settlement under strong government. 2. *A king chosen of God.* Divine frown, clouds and darkness taken away. A king given under different circumstances, "a man after God's own heart." 3. *Universal loyalty to the chosen king.* All joined in the choice, submission, and gratitude. **II. The manifestation of joy.** A cause or religion without expression or room for joy neither suits the wants of man nor accords with the will of God. 1. *In unity of purpose.* "To make David king." 2. *In sincerity of feeling.* "With a perfect heart." No deception, no half-hearted, no double-hearted. "Were of one heart and one soul." This oneness expressed in thought and act towards each other and towards their sovereign. 3. *In social fellowship.* Three days feasting. Not selfish, individual joy; but domestic, social, and national. **III. The extent of the joy.** "All the men of war" and "all the rest of Israel" (ver. 38). The soldier and the priest, the weak and the strong—all ages, all classes participated—none shut out from national feasting and rejoicing. This suggests the pure and unmixed joy in crowning and serving Christ as our king—the perfect happiness and order when he shall become the chosen of all nations, kindreds, and tribes. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 28. *Zadok the warrior priest* (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 17; 1 Kings i. 8). Notice—1. His profession. A soldier and priest. The cause, a “holy war.” 2. His qualifications. (a) “A young man.” (b) “Mighty of valour.” The need of young, valiant men, religious and devoted to God. “*The history of heroes is the history of youth*” [*Lord Beaconsfield*].

Ver. 32. *Understanding. Noscentes scite tempora*, such as well knew what was to be done and when to do it, by a singular sagacity, gotten by long experience, rather than by skill in astrology. See Esther i. 13. David set a high price upon these; so doth God on such as regard and use the season of well-doing [*Trapp*].

Ver. 33. *Not of a double heart.* Heb., without a heart and a heart; plain-hearted; *non aliud in ore promptum, aliud in pectore conclusum habentes*; downright dealers [*Trapp*]. 1. Men of fluctuating sentiments. “A

double-minded man” (having two minds) “is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. i. 7). 2. Men of compromising habits. “Woe be to the sinner that goeth two ways” (Ecclus. ii. 12). 3. Men of hypocritical worship. “Come not unto the Lord with a double heart” (Ecclus. i. 28).

Unity of purpose. Its strength and advantage. “Napoleon gained his victories by consolidation. Austria and Russia attacked in columns and separate bodies; he concentrated his forces and fell on one point like an avalanche. So it must be with the Church. Scepticism will never be broken. Popery will never be dissipated, till the whole Christian Church is more thoroughly at one with each other” [*Dr. Cumming*].

Ver. 38. *Under discipline.* I. What keeping rank involves. 1. Obedience to authority. 2. Regard to the general peace of the whole. 3. Mutual help. II. The importance of keeping rank in church life and action [*Bib. Museum*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1. *These came to David.* The good and the great draw others after them; they lighten and lift up all who are within reach of their influence. They are so many living centres of beneficent activity. Let a man of energetic and upright character be appointed to a position of trust and authority, and all who serve under him become, as it were, conscious of an increase of power [*S. Smiles*].

“Whose spirit lent a fire
Even to the dullest peasant in his camp”
[*Shakespeare*].

Ver. 8. *Separated themselves.*

“The man whom I
Consider as deserving of the name,
Is one whose thoughts and actions are for
others,
Not for himself alone; whose lofty aim,
Adopted on just principles, is ne'er
Abandoned while earth or heaven afford
The means of its accomplishment”

[*Blanchard*].

Ver. 32. *Men of understanding.*

Happy are those that, knowing in their births they are subject to uncertain changes, are still prepared and arm'd for either fortune; a rare principle, and with much labour learn'd in wisdom's school [*Massinger*].

Ver. 40. *Joy in Israel.* Joy is regarded as a happy accident of the Christian life, an ornament and luxury rather than a duty [*Dr. Dale*]. Joy in the Lord is strength, positive actual power for ministry. It creates around us the most favourable atmosphere for evoking our resources; raises our entire nature to the highest pitch of energy, and gives unwonted elasticity and capacity of tension to all our faculties. When the heart is brimming over with gladness, labour is acceptable, opposition helpful, duty a delight, and responsibility a privilege [*Dr. Clifford*]. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” [*stronghold*, marg.] (Neh. viii. 10).

CHAPTER XIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter corresponds closely with 2 Sam. vi. 1-11; but in the first verse of that chapter is stated, with great brevity, what is given here in full (vers. 1-5).

Vers. 1-5.—The Consultation. *Leaders* (omit *and*, for leaders intended) are captains named, *i.e.*, chiefs of people. If civil and military organisation existed before this, "David seems to have been the first to recognise in these officers of the host representatives of the people, to consult them on public affairs and to give them a certain political position (see, besides the present place, ch. xv. 25; xxvi. 26; xxviii. 1)" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 2. *All* assembled together; *send* quickly everywhere; *left* at home. Ver. 3. *Enquired not* (*cf.* 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2; xxviii. 6; 1 Chr. x. 14). Ver. 5. *Shihor*, probably one of the names of the Nile (*cf.* Jos. xiii. 3; Is. xxiii. 3; Jer. ii. 18); was the southern bounds, as Hemath was the northern of Canaan [*Pat.*]. *Kirjath-jearim*, where it had been since it returned out of land of Philistines (*cf.* 1 Sam. vi.).

Vers. 6-8.—The Undertaking (*cf.* 2 Sam. vi. 2-11). *All Israel*, 30,000 in Sam. Ver. 6. *Baalath* (Jos. xv. 9-60). *Whose name*, rather "who is worshipped there." Ver. 7. *Uzza* and *Ahio*, sons or grandsons of Abinadab, who from age or death was unable to accompany procession. Ver. 8. "*Harp*s and *lutes*, stringed instruments; *timbrels* and *cymbals*, percussive instruments for keeping time in march or solemn dance." Trumpets used by priests, generally on joyous occasions (Num. x.; Ps. xcvi. 6). Some suppose that Ps. xxxiv. was sung in parts on this occasion.

Vers. 9-14.—The Breach. *Chidon*, Nachon (2 Sam. vi. 6). *Stumbled*, descent steep and dangerous. *Hand*, ark not to be touched, would not have required it, if in obedience to law, it had been carried on the priests' shoulders by poles (*cf.* Ex. xxv. 14; Num. iv. 15). Ver. 11. David displeased and afraid at such sudden vindication of holiness. Ver. 14. *Obed*, a Levite, and afterwards doorkeeper in tabernacle (1 Chr. xv. 18; xvi. 5). *Gittite*, of Gath-rimmon, one of the Levitical cities (Jos. xxi. 24).

HOMILETICS.

THE FIRST COUNCIL.—Verses 1-5.

David securely established on the throne, taken and fortified Jerusalem, organised and trained an army, turns attention to civil and religious concerns. First thing to restore the ark to its proper place. Hence consultation with chiefs. **I. The parties of which it was composed.** David begins well. Instead of ignoring the people, he calls their representatives; he "consults" them and decides nothing absolutely, and unconstitutionally. Many sovereigns, proud and tyrannical, will yield nothing, give nothing, overrule the wish and rights of the people. "I am the state," said one. The people's allegiance is best secured by consent in their representatives. "If it seem good unto you." **II. The purpose for which it was convened.** Many historic councils summoned for important objects. This not called to celebrate success, organise plans of campaign; but to unite the people and establish the worship of the sanctuary by the restoration of the most sacred of all symbols. This—1. *A religious movement.* Former neglect great, people degenerated by influence and example of Saul; careless and indifferent concerning ordinances and worship of God. "We enquired not in the days of Saul." 2. *A national movement.* "If it seem good unto you." The throne established, national government under one head; foundation laid for internal unity by concentrating national life on its centre and source. Not like other kings, David displays in

proceedings the *popular character* of his rule, assembles all round the sanctuary before the throne, and under the government of Jehovah (Ps. xxiv. 1-10). 3. *A divinely sanctioned movement*. "If it be of the Lord our God." All enterprises opposed to *his will*, though carried on with numbers and valour, will come to nought. This first, "Is it the will of God?" For "man proposes, but God disposes." "Ye ought to say if the Lord will we shall live and do this or that." **III. The decision at which it arrived.** The purpose noble, and reasons for execution weighty and abundant. 1. *A wise decision*. "It was *right*." Always wise to seek first the kingdom of God, &c. "Oh that they were wise!" 2. *A unanimous decision*. "*All the congregation* said it was right." People rightly consulted readily agree. Leaders should never fear to appeal in God's name to the nation, seek to rouse its conscience and gain its sympathies. The response will be cordial and unanimous. "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey" (Jos. xxiv. 24). 3. *A firm decision*. "We will do so." Needful to be prudent in counsel and firm in execution.

THE ARK IN THE ROYAL CITY.

A place of honour, influence, and right, as—**I. The centre of unity.** Politically and morally, outwardly and inwardly people one. Unity in worship not complete, for there were two holy places, one in Gibeon, another pitched over the ark, but internal unity which did not exist before. **II. The source of religious life.** Under Saul it had fallen from the height to which Samuel had brought it. The royal family had lost piety, and, as instanced by Michal, had become proud. In her father's house she had an idol god. But this act—1. *Purified religious life*. Elevated its tone and grandeur. 2. *Unified religious life*. External unity destroyed by war between Saul and David. Now national life one centre and source in dwelling of God in Zion. The sanctuary in Gibeon retires from view. 3. *Organised religious life*. He arranged priests and Levites, divided them into classes for service, gave a new impulse to music and culture. Reorganisation raised divine worship from its disintegration and lawlessness under Saul to an artistic and beautiful order. **III. The sign of God's presence.** David had captains and mighty men, but God was required. Conscious of dependence upon God, he confesses desire to rule according to the will of God. If it be "of the Lord our God." This act one of reverence and gratitude, which enthrones God the king of glory (Ps. xxiv.); makes Jerusalem the city of the Great King (Ps. xlvi. 3); from whence proceed all manifestations of glory and might (Ps. xx. 3); and before whom it is an unspeakable privilege to worship. "Who may be guest in thy tent? who may dwell on thy *holy mountain*?" (Ps. xv. 1).

THE SOLEMN PROCESSION.—Verses 6-8.

Extreme anxiety to have the ark in the city, for counsel and succour on all occasions. To attain this all classes eager to undertake any effort and submit to any inconvenience. A procession formed which befits the object in view. **I. In military escort.** The way rugged, the enemy defeated, but not destroyed. We must ever be on guard. **II. In united ranks.** "All Israel" (30,000 in Sam.), king, priests, and people in order and position. All ranks indebted to God, all should join in service and praise. **III. In festive joy.** "The festival," says Dean Stanley, "was one which exactly corresponded to what in the Middle Ages would have been 'the Feast of

the Translation' of some great relic, by which a new city or a new church was to be glorified. Long sleepless nights had David passed in thinking of it (Ps. cxxxii. 4), as St. Louis of the transport of the Crown of Thorns to the Royal Chapel of Paris." Such joy is natural and becoming, pleasing to men and acceptable to God.

THE LESSON OF UZZA.—Verses 8-12.

David loved God, venerated the symbol of his presence, desired to restore appointed worship, and put the ark where it should be. But right things must be done in right manner, or they will fail. In this case failure, sad and signal, for Uzza died and the ark turned aside to the house of Obed-edom. **I. The failure.** Here multitudes, "David and all Israel," yet business nought. Crowds do not ensure blessing. Here pomp, singing, harps, trumpets, &c., yet ended in mourning. Gorgeous ceremonial no guarantee of grace. Here energy; "they played before God with all their might"—no dull and sleepy worship, but a bright, lively service, yet the matter fell through. But there was no thought as to God's mind. David confessed, "We sought him not after the due order" (1 Chr. xv. 13). The priests not in their places, nor Levites to carry the ark; oxen took the place of willing men. The worship was not sufficiently spiritual and humble. There was no sacrifice. This a fatal flaw, for how can we serve the Lord apart from sacrifice? There was little reverence. We hear little of prayer, but much of oxen, a cart, and the too familiar hand of Uzza. Now, even David must keep his place, and the Lord's command must not be supplanted by will-worship. Therefore the breach upon Uzza, and David greatly afraid. May we not expect similar failures, unless careful to act obediently and serve the Lord with holy awe? Are all observances and practices of our churches scriptural? Are not some of them purely will-worship? **II. The fear.** The terrible death of Uzza caused great fear. Thus the Lord slew Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire; and the men of Beth-shemesh for looking into the ark. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. x. 3). Sense of wrong-feeling caused fear in David, for we read, "And David was displeased" (ver. 11). We are too apt to be displeased with God because he is displeased with us. Sense of unworthiness for such holy work made him cry, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" His feeling that he failed in that which God expected of his servants created a holy fear. "Sanctify yourselves, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God" (1 Chr. xv. 12). He meant well, but erred and came to a pause; yet not for long. Ark remained with Obed-edom three months, not more (ver. 14). Some make the holiness of God and the strictness of His rule an excuse for wicked neglect. Others are overwhelmed with holy fear, and pause awhile till they are better prepared for the holy service [*Spurgeon*].

RIGHT THINGS DONE IN A WRONG WAY.

I. The matter and right manner of performing duties are, in the command of God, linked together. He will have his service well done, as well as really done, with a perfect heart and a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. Masters on earth challenge to themselves a power to oblige their servants, not only to do their work, but to do it so-and-so; and though they do the thing itself, yet if not in the manner required, it is not accepted. **II. The doing of a duty in a wrong manner alters the nature of it,**

and makes it sin. Hence, the ploughing of the wicked is sin (Prov. xxi. 4). Hence, prayer is accounted a howling upon their beds (IIos. vii. 14). Unworthy communicating is not counted as eating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20). If a house be built of never so strong timber and good stones, yet if it be not well founded and rightly built, the inhabitant may curse the day he came under the roof of it. **III. Duties not prepared according to the right order are but the half of the service we owe to God, and the worst half too** [*Thos. Boston*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Send abroad. Erumpamus, dimittamus.* Let us break forth and send, *i.e.*, let us send speedily and effectually. See his zeal for the Lord of Hosts [*Trapp*].

Ver. 8. *Played before God.* Public joy should always be as *before the Lord*, with an eye to him, and terminating in him, otherwise it is no better than public madness, and the source of all manner of wickedness [*Benson*].

Vers. 7-10. *Perez-Uzza.* 1. *The act of Uzza.* Rash, lacking faith in God's power or providence to preserve the ark; irreverent: disobedient. 2. *The punishment of Uzza.* Sudden, signal, and severe. Apparently out of all proportion to the act. But we are improper judges of wrong, desert, and divine justice. God displays holiness, to secure discipline and check sin, to which we are prone. *One* instance of justice may benefit generations and ages. 3. *The results of the punishment of Uzza.* (a) The procession was broken up. (b) David was afraid. "How could such a festal joy which knew nothing of holy fear, however well meant, prove acceptable to God? It is not enough that we mean well, and have pious thoughts; we must also, in what we do, hold fast to God's word and commandment, and in all our joy in the Lord must not allow ourselves to forget that we have to do with a holy God."

Uzza, or Irreverence in sacred things.
 1. Rashness in devotion. "God smote Uzza for his *rashness* (marg.);" (2 Sam. vi. 7). Worldly thoughts and plans brought into the very house and presence of God. Haste in spirit and utterance. "Be not rash with thy mouth," &c. (Ecc. v. 2). 2. Thoughtlessness in Christian effort. No due preparation, trust to accidents or emergencies. Inconsiderate effort has blasted many a noble project. Prudence and thought required. Collect and arrange materials; for an unfinished minister can never be "a wise master-builder." "Prepare thy work (set it in order) without and make it fit for thyself in the field" (Prov. xxiv. 27). 3. Sinfulness in the Christian ministry. Uzza a type of all who, unsanctified in spirit, take upon themselves to rescue the cause of God. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." *Profanation of the ark.* It is of importance to observe the proportionate severity of the punishment attending the profanation of the ark. The Philistines suffered by diseases, from which they were relieved by their oblations, because the law had not been given to them; the Bethshemites also suffered, but not fatally, their error proceeding from ignorance or inadvertency; but Uzza, who was a Levite and well instructed, suffered death for his breach of the law [*Jamieson*].

HOMILETICS.

PEREZ-UZZA AND ITS LESSONS.

Arrangements of David for transport of the Ark differed from those which God had prescribed (Num. iv.). Never carry on the work of God by means

which God has forbidden. Learn—**I. If God be absent from a people, and the ark be long in obscurity, that people will lose a sense of reverence.** All thought of divine power in the ark forgotten, a question of mere safety, not reverence; arrangements those of heathen nations, not divine injunctions. **II. That God, mindful of his honour, often singles out guilty men to be monuments of his displeasure.** God will be sanctified in those who come nigh him (Lev. x. 3). Uzza presumptuous and irreverent, like Nadab and Abihua, suffered for sin. "When many have sinned, God commonly punishes one or two of the leaders, in order that the others may remember their sin and beg forgiveness." **III. That by such examples of terror God warns others.** King, priests, and people inspired with dread of divine majesty. Judgment opened the eyes and humbled the soul of David, who wisely delayed for thought, self-examination, and, under divine teaching, to learn the right way. "For when thy judgments are in (strike) the earth, the inhabitants of the world (earth) will learn righteousness" (Is. xxvi. 9).

"Heaven wills our happiness, allows our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not compels" [*Young*].

DAVID'S DISPLEASURE.—*Verses 11, 12.*

The king greatly agitated, dreaded God's displeasure might be extended to himself and people if ark further conveyed. Resolved to wait. The word betokens anger and grief, used by Jonah (iv. 1-9). **I. He was afraid of personal danger.** He had neglected duty; knew not what might happen; dangerous to bring ark into the city. A guilty conscience makes cowards. **II. He was vexed at the interruption of his plan.** People disappointed, his prestige damaged, and his enemies encouraged. We are often tempted to find fault when our religious enterprise is interrupted, when *we* as leaders are dishonoured, and our purposes broken. Complain of God's providence when we should accuse ourselves. "Should it be according to thy mind?" **III. He was overcome with superstitious dread.** Something about the ark itself he did not understand. He misinterpreted the event. Superstition ever misdirects, scares by expected evil. "It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity" [*Bacon*].

THE HOUSE OF OBEDEDOM.—*Verse 14.*

People dismayed, David perplexed, one perfectly calm and ready to welcome the ark. Obed, not a great warrior; for great talents no guarantee for holy life and faithful service (Balaam, Saul, Byron), but a man of sincere heart and upright conduct. **I. The service which he rendered.** The ark was carried "aside into the house of Obed-edom." A most signal service which no one else would undertake. A service for which he was trained, and which he was ready when required to give. Lonely homes are scenes of highest trust and purest character. Not the palace, but the cottage often the residence of God, and the national glory. **II. The spirit in which he performed this service.** Uzza slain for rashness, David shrinks in fear, Obed-edom receives ark gladly. 1. *In filial fear.* In love to God and earnest desire to help his cause. 2. *In striking courage.* He knew what had been done among the Philistines and the Bethshemites, yet invites the ark to his house. "O the courage," says Bishop Hall, "of an honest and faithful heart! Nothing can make God otherwise than amiable to him; even his justice is lovely." **III.**

The reward which he gained. "The Lord blessed the house." 1. A *personal* blessing. 2. A *social* blessing. 3. An *extensive* blessing. "All that he had." None suffer whose guest is the ark of God. Piety is the best friend to prosperity. Happy and attractive the home in which God dwells.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 9-13. 1. God's people misinterpret his dealings. 2. How much they lose by this interpretation. 3. How much they gain who receive God simply. (1) Beware of flying from God or shutting out God. (2) Let God into the heart and the dwelling [*H. Bonar*].

Ver. 14. *Ark in the house.* Family devotion, its nature, duty, and results. Howard, the philanthropist, never neglected family prayer, if even but one, and that his domestic servant, declaring that where he had a tent, God should have an altar. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name."

The Ark with Uzza, David, and Obed-edom; or the Ark the cause of judgment, fear, and blessing, according to its treatment.

Ver. 14. *Blessed.* As he will do all those, both small and great, that favour his cause and further his kingdom; for he is a liberal paymaster, and his retributions are more than bountiful. If Abinadab was not so well blessed as Obed-edom, it was haply because he entertained not the ark with like reverence. As men measure to God in preparation, &c., so will God measure to them in blessing [*T'rapp*].

"A Deity believed, will nought avail,
Rewards and punishments make God
adored" [*Young*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 6-8. *Singing.* Oh that we might have such joy as that which inspired the men at the battle of Leuthen! They were singing a Christian song as they went into battle. A general said to the king, "Shall I stop these people singing?" "No," said the king. "*Men that can sing like that can fight*" [*Talmage*].

Ver. 11. *Breach.* God would have us read our sins in our judgments, that we might both repent of our sins, and give glory to his justice [*Bishop Hall*].

Ver. 14. *Blessed the house.* Parents! if you would banish Satan from your households, and with him all the train

of sins that bring misery and desolation into many a home, and convert into a wilderness with wild beasts what might be a family paradise, where every human affection bloomed in beauty, grew in grace, and brought forth fruit to God's glory, seek the constant presence of Jesus Christ, and covet, above all earthly honour or renown, that your family should be like that one of old in Bethany which "Jesus loved." *His* presence will be your true prosperity, making your daily mercies true mercies, and your seasons of bereavement seasons of richest blessing and deepest peace [*Rev. Nor. Macleod, D.D.*].

CHAPTER XIV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter runs parallel with 2 Sam. v. 11-25, and presents a general verbal identity, which is insufficiently represented by the Authorised Version. The only important variations from 2 Sam. v. are in verses 4-7 and 12, in the former of which passages the sons of David are given somewhat differently, while in the latter the fact is added that the idols taken from the Philistines were burned [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1, 2.—*David's house.* II. elsewhere Hiram (2 Chr. ii. 3; viii. 18; ix. 10; cf. 2 Sam. v. 11). A Phœnician, a Canaanite, speaking the language of David, and sovereign of a city trading in cedars and abounding with craftsmen in stone and wood [cf. *Murphy*]. Ver. 2. *Confirmed* in contrast to his former state and the fate of Saul's kingdom.

Vers. 3-7.—*David's family* (cf. 2 Sam. iii. 5). Concubines in ch. iii. 9; a list of children vers. 5-8; those born in Jerusalem, 2 Sam. v. 14-16. But names of Eliphalet and Nogah not found, and Beeliada appears the same as Eliada.

Vers. 8-17.—*David's victories.* *Seek* to ruin him before consolidated in kingdom. Ver. 9. *Rephaim* (xi. 15) south-east of Jerusalem, near capital of David. Ver. 10. *Enquired* for high-priest to give tone to his reign. Ver. 11. *Smote* in the engagement at Mount Perazim (Is. xxxviii. 21), in valley of Rephaim. This first victory. Ver. 12. *God's images* carried into battlefields (1 Sam. iv. 4-11; 2 Sam. v. 21).

Vers. 13-17.—*Second victory.* Again in next season campaign renewed. Ver. 14. *Not up* to meet them directly; come upon them by stratagem in the rear. Ver. 15. *Sound*, the rustling of leaves by strong breeze, the appointed sign and moment for attack. Ver. 16. *Gibeon*, now *Yefsa*, in Judah. Ver. 17. *Fame* in all the surrounding nations. This verse an appropriate conclusion, not found in Samuel.

HOMILETICS.

THE BUILDING OF THE ROYAL HOUSE.—Verses 1, 2.

David had conquered Jebusites; made Zion capital; had now wisely made a treaty with a neighbouring prince. Magnanimous and godfearing. In Hiram's conduct notice—**I. An instance of true friendship.** History gives noble examples of love and friendship. 1. *This was genuine.* Real and excellent. David need of artisans. War and disorder had depopulated. "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

2. *This was lasting.* Friends often change with change of principles and circumstances; vary with temperature and desert in meanness. Hiram did to the son what he had done to the father (2 Chr. ii. 3); "for Hiram was ever a lover of David" (1 Kings v. 1). **II. An illustration of human agency in the service of God.** None independent. All require friends and help. Rich to give to poor; wise to teach the ignorant, and kings to rule subjects. All may communicate, interchange stores of thought, knowledge, and substance. 1. *Agency in men.* Tyrian workmen renowned and skilful; helped David to build a city, so splendid in cedar structures that Jeremiah exclaimed, "Thou dwellest on Lebanon and makest thy nest in the cedars" (Jer. xxii. 23). 2. *Agency in materials.* Israel agricultural, furnished corn and oil; Tyre commercial, gave its manufactures and foreign produce. Thus mutually helpful. All the

treasures of art and materials of nature subserve man's highest interests and God's work. **III. A proof of God's providence.** David more than "fortunate in having a friend in Hiram at this time." 1. *Providence in Hiram's conduct.* God disposed him to render help. The God of infinite wisdom has a purpose in the rise and fall of empires, in all events of life, obscure or illustrious. As a gardener directs rills of water through different parts of his ground, so "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. xxi. 1). 2. *Providence in David's accession to the throne.* "David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel." By internal unity, external peace, and friendly connection with Hiram. 3. *Providence in the honour and extension of David's kingdom.* "And that his kingdom was exalted on high." Respected at home and abroad among nations; elevated as the people of God above others in knowledge, privilege, and destiny. In building characters, churches, and societies rely upon God, not too much upon human friendship and human instrumentality, wealth, eloquent preachers and active evangelists. Recognition, consciousness of God, gives strength and success. "David perceived," &c.

HIRAM AND DAVID.

The treaty between these two kings illustrates—I. **The providence of God in the exaltation of a good man.** "Confirmed him king." Scholars, ministers, statesmen, fitted and exalted from obscurity to honour. Joseph from prison to prime minister; Garfield from log cabin to White House; Livingstone from Blantyre to Westminster Abbey. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." II. **The influence of a good man upon others when thus exalted.** David's influence far and near. Men pay homage to moral worth and holy life. This power every Christian may possess and wield. The secret is, "The Lord was with him." III. **The design for which God exalts a good man.** "For his people Israel's sake" (2 Sam. v. 12). Not for themselves, but for others are men enriched and honoured. Great interests often sacrificed for selfish ends. Kings, popes, and emperors forget that others are as dear to God as they. Elevation should never separate. Kings created for the people, not the people for kings.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. 1. *David's house built.* Fit for his court and homage. Workmen of a wealthy prince helped to rear it. "The sons of strangers shall build up" the walls of the spiritual house, "and their kings shall minister unto thee" (Is. lx. 10). 2. *David's kingdom established.* Saul not established. Nothing to shake or disturb possession. Exalted before friend and foe. "Higher than the kings of the earth." 3. *God's hand recognised in this.* Many blessed and honoured do not perceive this, will

not acknowledge God, talk about their "fortune," "star," and "chance." "David perceived," &c. "By this I know that thou favourest me" (Ps. xli. 1).

Ver. 2. *Lifted up.* Man throws down. God lifts up persons, societies, and nations; lifts up above distress, opposition, and danger. "A good man in great prosperity." 1. He ascribes it all to the Lord. 2. He regards it as given him for the benefit of his fellow-men" [Lange].

HOMILETICS.

THE EXTENSION OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.—*Verses 3-7.*

When the palace was built and the kingdom established, David's family multiplied and increased. Of his sons, see 1 Chr. iii. 1-9; and his concubines, 2 Sam. xv. 16; xvi. 22; xix. 5. This—**I. In worldly policy.** Always thought to be politic to have many children; marry them into powerful families, and thus strengthen interest and gain support. The custom of Oriental monarchs to gather a numerous harem. This an essential part of court-state, and a symbol of royal power. But David overstepped the mark and went astray. "Men who have once broken the fence will wander carelessly." **II. In disobedience to God's command.** Multiplication of wives expressly forbidden to the kings of Israel. "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deut. xvii. 17). Worldly policy often contradictory to God's design. Expediency never safe. Divine wisdom the only preservative and redemptive force in life. "When wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee."

"To know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom" [*Milton*].

FAMOUS BATTLES.—*Verses 8-17.*

Philistines afraid of David's growing power—that he would wipe away the national dishonour of Gilboa, and that his knowledge of the country would give superior advantage in war—resolve to attack, surprise, and ruin him. *Went up to seek*, with intention to crush him before consolidated in his kingdom (*cf.* 1 Sam. xxiii. 15; xxiv. 2), but were overcome in two famous battles. **I. The counsel by which they were undertaken.** "David enquired of God" (ver. 10); "David enquired again of God" (ver. 13). In all affairs look to God for direction. Have his will and word for your guide. Means always at hand to discover his will. Submit thoughts, plans, and ways to God's approval—to check if wrong, to perfect if right. If depressed by their weight, "commit" (literally, roll as a burden which you cannot bear) "*thy way* unto the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 5). "Roll *thy works*" (thy undertakings) "upon the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 3). **II. The help by which they were fought.** This from above. 1. *In divine direction.* "The Lord said unto him, go up." Never stir without this. 2. *In hearty co-operation.* David did not entrench himself in Zion, nor act merely on the defensive, but made the attack and conquered. "To serve the gods was to reign," said a heathen writer. **III. The victories which they gained.** Brilliant and complete. 1. *The enemy overcome.* "David smote them"—like rising waters, overflowing their banks and sweeping everything before them. 2. *Their false confidence destroyed.* Philistines carried their gods into battle, with the belief, common in ancient nations, that they would grant success. Their owners left them helpless on the field; the victors carried them as trophies to the capital, and consumed them in the flames. "They were burned with fire." 3. *David became famous.* "The fame of David went out unto all lands" (ver. 17). As a great warrior, a powerful monarch, and a good man. 4. *God was honoured.* Acknowledged as the source of victory—"God hath broken in" (ver. 11)—praised for his gift and presence, and feared above all the gods of the earth. Give to him the glory due to his name.

SIGNALS FOR DUTY.—*Verses 15, 16.*

In the responses to David's inquiries we not simply have commands in words, and symbols in sound, but signals for duty or action. **I. God's answer to man's prayer.** Given twice, in terms direct and explicit. 1. *Prayer for knowledge of duty.* "Shall I go?" 2. *Prayer for assurance of success.* "Wilt thou deliver them into my hand?" David often defeated. For his own encouragement and that of his army, he desires grounds of confidence. True prayer will give knowledge, hope, and strength. **II. God's help in man's circumstances.** These often strange and apparently against us; render powerless and insufficient. God's help adequate to feeble men and scanty resources. In his service never left without indications of his presence. "God is gone forth before thee." **III. God's signal for man's action.** We need not only to *know* and strength to *obey* God's will, but the call to duty—the signal to "go" at the exact time. A detachment on one occasion waited for orders, longed to join their comrades in battle, instead of standing in silence, exposed to danger. At length Wellington gave the command, and the attack was successful. "They serve who stand and wait." A time to "stand still" and to "go forward," but God must give the signal. Wait for his salvation. "The vision shall come and not tarry."

THE BATTLE OF BAAL-PERAZIM.—*Verses 8-12.*

Here the Philistines marched from Rephaim, pitched their tent, and offered battle (2 Sam. v. 18-20). **I. The spirit in which it was fought.** Most commendable and advantageous. 1. *A spirit of reliance upon God.* "Shall I go?" An attitude of conscious danger and helplessness. 2. *A spirit of humility.* David talks of his "hand," not his sword. God is the giver, he only receives with the hand. None fit to be great but those who can stoop lowest. "Before honour is humility." 3. *A spirit of obedience.* "They came up." Wise to listen to and obey law—to be convinced of its divine authority and justice. Men ever ready to *order*, to *modify* and *repeal*, in danger and doubt. But "the wise in heart will receive commandments." 4. *A spirit of courage.* Victory promised by God, hence bravery and enthusiasm. "A good cause makes a stout heart."

"He holds no parley with unmanly fears,
Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And trusting in his God, surmounts them all" [Cowper].

II. The scenes by which it was characterised. Battlefields never pleasant to inspect. Great soldiers have often wept on them. 1. *Shameful defeat.* "David smote them," and like an impetuous flood carried all before him. The defeat terrible, and perpetuated in name of place. "*Baal-perazim* water-breach" (*cf.* Is. xxviii. 21). 2. *National disgrace.* The gods were forsaken, lost, and destroyed. The disgrace of the Philistine's capture of the ark was wiped away, and the idolatrous people dishonoured. God makes men weary of things they love, and compels them to desert what they worship. "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats" (Is. ii. 20).

THE BATTLE OF GIBEON.—*Verses 14-17.*

Again the enemy renewed hostile attempt with greater force. God interposes in a peculiar way, caused a sound to be heard, and David suddenly attacked from

behind the mulberry-trees. Notice—**I. A special change in tactics.** Much depends upon methods in war. David not permitted to act as in first battle, though successful. This would have been natural. But God alone must be followed; not rules of earthly warfare, not past experience, nor past success must guide. God does “a new thing.” “Thou shalt not go up; fetch a compass behind them.” **II. A special sign by which these tactics are carried out.** “When thou shalt hear a sound of going, &c.” 1. *A supernatural sign.* “Sound of going”—viz., of God. Soldiers must look to the commander for orders. This, many think, was a noise made by angels, who came to help (*cf.* 2 Kings vii. 6). 2. *A disciplinary sign.* Requiring an *upward look*, an *open eye* to see, an *attentive ear* to hear. Duty of soldiers to wait and watch in readiness and order. 3. *A typical sign.* In the setting up of Christ’s kingdom, disciples waited to be equipped for work. The Spirit “came with a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.” When they heard and felt that, they bestirred themselves, and went forth to conquer.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 8. 1. A vigilant foe. “Philistines heard.” 2. An army on guard. “David heard.” 3. An army prepared to meet the foe. “Went out against them.” A Christian’s duty like that of a soldier. He does not attempt to meet temptation, to fight the enemy in his own strength. His watchfulness lies in observing its approach, telling God of it in prayer, and being prepared in God’s strength.

Ver. 10. 1. The thing to ascertain. Is it God’s will? 2. The power required to perform it when known. Many wish for God’s favour and help without doing God’s will. The order can never be reversed; first God’s will, then God’s help. No answer and no power, if not in right attitude and relation to him.

Ver. 11. *God hath broken asunder* or through mine enemies as a breach of waters, *i.e.*, as a violent torrent makes a *rift* or *breach*. Philistines scattered suddenly, unexpectedly and violently. God’s terrors awful. “Thy fierce anger goeth over me (as waves of the sea); thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together” (Ps. lxxxviii. 16, 17).

Vers. 9–11. 1. An instance of self-conquest. David conquered self, and then consulted God. 2. A lesson of

dependence upon God. Pray, look up, and expect. 3. An instance of success through obedience.

“God fights the battles of a will resigned.”

Ver. 15. *Sound of going* applies figuratively to us also in our spiritual conflict with the children of unbelief in the world. There, too, it comes to nothing that one should make war with his own prowess and merely in the human equipment of reason and science. Success can only be reckoned on when the conflict is waged amid the blowing of the Holy Spirit’s breath and with the immediate presence of the Lord and of the truth of his word [*Krummacher*]. *God before thee.* 1. In the pledge of success. 2. By confounding the enemy. Sound something amazing, like the noise of a mighty host. Hence panic and flight.

Ver. 15. *Before thee.* 1. A word of *consolation* in sore distress. 2. A word of *encouragement* amid inward conflict. 3. A word of *exhortation* to unconditional obedience of faith. 4. A word of *assurance* of the victory which the Lord gives [*Lange*]. *The rustling of the Lord’s approaching help* in the tops of the trees. 1. Dost thou wait for it at his bidding? 2. Dost thou hear it with the right heed? 3. Dost thou understand it in the right sense?

4. Dost thou follow it without delay? [*Idem*]. *Victory comes from the Lord.*
 1. When it is beforehand humbly asked for according to the Lord's will and word. 2. When the battle is

undertaken in the Lord's name and for His cause. 3. When it is fought with obedient observation of the Lord's directions and guidance [*Idem*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1, 2. *Hiram and David.*

"A generous friendship no cold medium knows.

Burns with one love, with one resentment glows" [*Pope's Homer*].

It was reckoned a crime among the Romans to be without a friend. "Friends," says one, "are to be inventoried as well as goods."

Ver. 8. David heard of it. "Set double guard on that point to-night," was an officer's command when an attack was expected.

Ver. 10. *Shall I go up?* The English Ambassador to the Court of Prussia sat at a table of Frederick the Great, then meditating a war whose sinews were to be mainly formed of English subsidies. Round the table sat infidel French wits, and they and the king made merry over decadent superstitions, the follies of the ancient faith. Suddenly the talk changed to war. Said the Ambassador, "England would, by the help of God, stand by Prussia." "Ah!" said the infidel Frederick, "I did not know you had an ally of that

name," and the infidel wits smirked applause. "So, please your Majesty," was the swift retort, "He is the only ally to whom we do not send subsidies" [*Baxendale*].

Vers. 14-16. Luther's strength lay in the way in which he laid the burden of the Reformation upon the Lord. Continually in prayer he pleaded, "Lord, this is thy cause, not mine. Therefore, do thine own work; for if this gospel do not prosper, it will not be Luther alone who will be a loser, but thine own name will be dishonoured" [*Spurgeon*].

Ver. 17. *Fame of David.* "Begin with modesty, if you would end with honour."

"Some men are raised to station and command,
 When Providence means mercy to a land.
 He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
 Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
 To manage with address, to seize with power
 The crisis of a decisive hour" [*Cowper*].

CHAPTER XV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The bulk of this chapter consists of new matter, which the writer of Chronicles found in his authorities, and regarding as important for his purpose, introduced at this point into the narrative. Only verses 25-29 are parallel with 2 Samuel, corresponding to ch. vi. 12-23 [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-3.—*Preparation to remove ark. Houses.* Interval of three months employed in building his palace and city for accommodation of his wives and family. *Tent*, a new one, old one still at Gibeon (2 Chr. xvi. 39; 2 Chr. i. 3); thought to be too old, perhaps. Ver. 2. *None*, except Levites, to bear ark, nor convey it in cart (*cf.* Num. i. 50; Jos. ix. 7-17). "External things carried on waggons under charge of Gershonites and

Merarites ; but articles of the sanctuary to be borne on poles by Kohathites" (Num. iv.). Ver. 4. *All representatives of nation.*

Vers. 5-15.—Priests and Levites. "This classification of sons of Aaron, as the special priests, and of the Levites, is constantly observed (ch. xii. 26, 27 ; xxvii. 17). The mention of the six representative Levitical families follows. That of Kohath (ver. 5) takes lead, because, though second in order of birth (Gen. xlv. 11 ; Ex. vi. 16-19 ; ch. vi. 1-30), its priestly importance gave it always first rank. To the same head belonged also three of the remaining five families, viz., Hebron (ver. 9) and Uzziel (ver. 10), who were brothers, as being both sons of Kohath (Ex. vi. 18) ; and Elizaphan, who, though son of Uzziel (Ex. vi. 22), had come to represent a distinct family (Num. iii. 30). The other two required to complete the six are Asaiah (ver. 6), of the house of Merari, and Joel (ver. 7), of the house of Gershon. The representatives, then, of these six families, with the company of the brethren belonging to each of them, and the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar (ver. 11), are now summoned into the presence of David to receive a short but special charge."

Vers. 11-13.—David's address. Sanctify, according to Mosaic requirements, before engaging in any service (Num. i. 50 ; vii. 9 ; x. 17 ; 2 Chr. xxix. 5). Ver. 13. *Did not sanctify yourselves before.* Levites even sadly to blame. *Breach* (ch. xiii. 11). *Order* that ark should be borne on shoulders of Levites (*cf.* ver. 15).

Vers. 16-21.—The singers. Sacred song in use from earliest times (Ex. xv. ; Deut. xxxii. ; Jud. v.). This first occasion on which duty of conducting musical services expressly laid on Levites. Hitherto music seems to have been cultivated in "schools of the prophets" (1 Sam. x. 5). Henceforth services of tabernacle and temple were regularly choral, and a considerable section of Levites was trained in musical knowledge and set apart to conduct this portion of national worship (*cf.* ch. xxiii. 5 ; xxv. 1-31 ; 2 Chr. v. 12 ; vii. 6 ; xxxv. 15) [*Speak. Com.*].

Ver. 17.—Heman (*cf.* 1 Kings iv. 31 ; 1 Chr. ii. 6). Ver. 18. *Second*, subordinate leaders, or forming the second choir. *Porters* applies to Obed-edom and Jeiel (or Jehiah, ver. 24). Ver. 19. *Cymbals*, instruments of percussion, making clanging sound. Ver. 20. *Psalteries*, a kind of lute. *Alamoth*. "psalteries of high pitch," whose tones resembled voices of girls (*alamoth*) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 21. *Shem.*, the eighth in a series of times, or an instrument with eight strings ; uncertain meaning. *Excel*, lead or preside : harpers with bass voices led, and lutists with treble followed.

Vers. 22-24.—Bearers of ark. Chen., chief, from his office, and different from Chen, in ch. xxvi. 29. *For song*, marg. for carriage. *Instructed*, presided over bearing. *Skilful* in customs and observances in carriage of holy things. Vers. 23, 24. This part of cortege arranged thus : Berechiah and Elkanah went before to open doors. The seven priests followed, blowing trumpets (Num. x. 8), and Obed-edom and Jehiah brought up the rear and closed the doors, when the ark was put in its place. Arrangements here merely for the occasion, and it was possible for these two doorkeepers to sing in choir and afterwards close the sacred doors [*Murphy*].

Vers. 25-29.—The procession. Ver. 26. *Helped*, regarded with favour. *Offered*, distinct from that in 2 Sam. vi. 13. Ver. 27. *Linen*, made of *buts* (byssus), a species of flax ; a robe worn by highest rank kings and priests (Esth. viii. 15 ; 1 Sam. xxii. 18). *All Levites* formed part of procession. Ver. 28. *Cornet*, first time mentioned. Ver. 29. *Danced* accords with brief account in 2 Sam. vi. 15. *Michal* (*cf.* 2 Sam. vi. 20-23).

HOMILETICS.

A PLACE PREPARED FOR THE ARK.—Verses 1-4.

David anxious to convey the ark from house of Obed-edom to tabernacle in Zion. **I. An evidence of his desire for God's presence.** He thought more about a place for the ark of God than the splendour of the palace and the enlargement of the city. Men build houses, buy land, and make fortunes, but have no room for God, for a church in the house, for a temple in the city. **II. An indication of a better state of mind.** Not now afraid, did not ery, "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" (2 Sam. vi. 9). In three months wonderfully changed. Obed-edom's prosperity and divine judgment broke down prejudice, humbled him, and induced him to arrange for return of ark. "Thy judgments are made manifest." **III. A proof of anxiety for the welfare of his people.** Not anxious to fill

the city with soldiers, to build warehouses, but to pitch a tent for God. The seat of government should be the centre of worship. The presence of the ark asserted the presence, supremacy, and claims of God. The king desired the people to remember *Him* in their homes and their business. **IV. An earnest endeavour to secure that welfare.** David first to move, prominent in effort, and earnest in consulting the people. He prepared a place, was ready to employ labour, and make sacrifice to accomplish the work. To "the chief of the fathers" he gave a solemn charge and a personal example. Let us thus work ourselves, and incite others to follow our example.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK, OR CARRYING ON THE WORK OF GOD.—*Verses 1-24.*

The chapter gives an account of preparation and procession in the removal of the ark. Learn—**I. Preparation for God's work.** The work important and needful, should never be undertaken without thought, purpose, and preparation. 1. *By personal sanctification.* "Sanctify yourselves" (ver. 12). Legal defilement unfitted for solemn duties. Removal of sin from heart and life, the first requisite in seeking and serving God. Secret sin forsaken, the heart made steadfast and sincere. "If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away." 2. *By implicit obedience to God's command.* God's work done in *God's* way, not in ours. Trifles most serious. Difference between a cart and poles in conveying ark seems small. But "to the law and testimony." No right to put the plans, the ordinances of men for the commandments of God. **II. Hearty co-operation in God's work.** David sought fit persons, and appealed to priests and Levites to help. This co-operation given. 1. *Gained by consultation.* David could not force, calls the assembly and makes appeal. Well-conducted meetings. Teachers' Meetings, Ministers' Conferences, and National Councils of great help in effective work. "Come now and let us take counsel together." 2. *Displayed in united ranks.* In "due order" (ver. 13). In obedience to God, and special rank in procession. Neglect of this brought failure at first. Worship, work, and liberality should be systematic. "Order gave each thing view" [*Shakespeare*]. 3. *Expressed by individual effort.* Each took his place and gave his work. Some played with cymbals, harps, and psalteries; others "did blow with the trumpets." Some sang and others danced. Some door-keepers and others commanders. All joined the order and the shouts (2 Sam. vi. 15). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." **III. Success achieved in God's work.** If sincerely consecrated and unitedly engaged, we shall succeed in God's service. When all was done reverently and in order. "God helped the Levites that bare the ark." They might tremble in remembrance of former judgments; but they did not *stumble*. The sacrifices were acceptable to God, and the favour of God was not withheld. Songs of praise were given, and the ark "came to the city of David."

THE PROCESSION WITH THE ARK.—*Verses 3-23.*

After due preparation, the procession arranged, and we have all particulars. **I. The bearers of the ark.** "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites." David had carefully ascertained legal requirements, and anxious they should be strictly carried out. 1. *Rightly chosen.* 2. *Properly arranged.* Three families of Levites (vers. 4-7). Kohathites not priests (vers. 8-10); Zadok and Abiathar, the princes of two priestly lines of house of Aaron. **II. The regulations for conveying the ark.** These varied.

1. *Sacrificial rites.* (a) At beginning for help. (b) At the end in gratitude. These forgotten in first attempt, hence the breach. 2. *Musical accompaniments.* Leaders in song and subordinate or second choir. Psalteries, cymbals, and lutes, accompanied procession. 3. *Rapturous joy.* Joy unbounded, expressed in corresponding gestures and rhythmical movements. (a) *The king danced.* A religious ceremony in which highest and holiest feeling found expression. (b) *The people shouted and sang.* The festival was popular, right, joyous. The king took the lead, and God made the whole people glad. Every one did "soar above the heights of earth."

"Joy is the sweet voice, joy the luminous cloud.
We in ourselves rejoice!
And then flows all that charms our ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light" [Coleridge].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *A place for the ark.* 1. A lovely thought. 2. A wise consultation to carry it out. 3. An example worthy of imitation.

Ver. 2. *None ought.* 1. Wise men may be guilty of oversight and wrong. The king and priests knew the law, and should have carried it out. 2. God's methods of bringing them to acknowledge and confess wrong, often severe, memorable, and beneficial in results. "When pious men, who have been betrayed into unwarrantable conduct, have had time for self-examination, searching the Scriptures, and prayer, they will discover and confess their mistakes, and be reduced to a better temper; they will justify God in his corrections; they will be convinced that safety and comfort consist, not in absenting themselves from his ordinances, or in declining dangerous services, but in attending to their duty in a proper spirit and manner; they will profit by their own errors" [Scott].

None ought to carry, &c. Gentle reproof. 1. Do we not deserve it? Have we not erred from God in doctrine and conduct? 2. Can we receive it without offence from prince or peasant? 3. When thus reprov'd, are we ready to amend? "To reprehend well," says Feltham, "is the most necessary and the hardest part of friendship. Who is there that does not merit a check? And yet how few will endure one!" "Its nail," says an old author, "must be well oiled with kindness before it can be effectually driven home." "Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil; it shall not break my head."

Vers. 2-24. 1. The call to service—personal, pressing, and worthy. 2. The response to the call—ready, universal, and immediate. 3. The directions to carry it out—clear, right, and safe. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

HOMILETICS.

PERSONAL HOLINESS ESSENTIAL TO SACRED SERVICE.—Verse 12.

Sanctify yourselves, a needful duty for any work for God. Present comfort and eternal happiness depend upon this. **I. Personal holiness required in those who serve.** Holiness means setting apart, fitting for special use. God's servants separated from a profane world and devoted to God. 1. *In heart.* This must be purified, and filled with holy thoughts and aspirations. Likeness

to God in mind and disposition. Root and centre of spiritual being rectified. "Sanctify the Lord God *in your hearts*." 2. *In life*. Holiness of heart reproduced, translated into life, retain. "Be ye holy in all manner of *conversation*" (deportment, course of life) (1 Pet. i. 15). **II. Personal holiness the pattern according to which we must serve.** "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy;" "Be ye holy as I am holy." *Idea* of perfection lost through sin. Christ brought God's holiness from the region of abstraction within sight and easy reach. Infidels even admire his character, but to believers he is a model of imitation, the standard, the law of life and service. There is innate likeness by regeneration and the indwelling Spirit; outward likeness by conformity, study, and obedience. He did the will of God, went about doing good, and sets an example. "Be ye therefore followers" (imitators) "of God, as dear children" (Eph. v. 1). **III. Personal holiness is the only condition on which we can serve.** Not only necessary for personal salvation, but for personal usefulness. 1. *By this we influence others*. Doctrines not always understood. Holiness seen, felt, and admired. Holy living wins to Christ and helps his cause. 2. *By this we answer the end of our being*. Of no use whatever without holiness; worse than a rose without blossom, or a tree without fruit. Use the design in view. "He hath not called you to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

SACRED JOY: ITS SOURCE AND MANIFESTATIONS.

The conveyance of the ark an occasion of general rejoicing (*cf.* Pss. ci.; xv.; lxxviii.; xxiv.; cxxxii., which are supposed to commemorate the event). **I. The source of sacred joy.** Sacred—that is, true joy, not a common feeling, must have some cause or spring. By nature, too full of ingratitude and morbid feeling. 1. *God's presence with us*. In our hearts, renewing and cleansing them. In our homes, sanctifying bereavements and guiding domestic affairs. In duties, public and private. With God, even in trouble and obscurity, our life may be "a sunshine in a shady place." "All my springs are in thee." 2. *God's blessing upon our efforts*. Effort essential to health and joy. God's blessing upon work rightly done gladdens the heart and turns grief into gladness. "God hath made them rejoice with great joy." **II. The manifestations of sacred joy.** Joy not self-concealing. Here seen in forms fit and natural. From beginning to end, all "with joy" (vers. 16 and 25). 1. *In sacred psalmody*. "The singers with instruments of music, &c." (ver. 16). Reminding of Milton's "sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." 2. *In sacrificial rites*. Without these, ceremony incomplete. In the success of any enterprise, the completion of any work, offer thanksgivings, "sacrifices of joy." Duty performed with the presence and by direction of God will create enthusiasm in numbers, and bring many a festal day!

"A solemn yet a joyful thing is life,
Which, being full of duties, is for this
Of gladness full, and full of lofty hopes."

DAVID BEFORE THE ARK.—Verses 25–29.

"It was the greatest day in David's life. Its significance in his career is marked by his own pre-eminent position—conqueror, poet, musician, priest in one. The sacrifices were offered by him; the benedictions, both on his people and on his household, were pronounced by him. He was the presiding spirit of the whole scene" [*Stanley*]. **I. David's attire.** "Clothed with a robe of fine linen" (ver. 27). 1. *Priestly attire*. White ephod worn only by priests. David

the head of "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6), and on this occasion performed the functions of a priest. 2. *A penitential dress.* Although king, David laid aside royal robes and put on the dress of a servant, and owned himself as mere minister of God. He sets forth his humility in the presence of whole people. In position and spirit expresses dependence upon God, and becomes the faithful leader and overseer. **II. David's conduct.** His joy increased as procession went on, expressed according to the manner of the times—singing, shouting, and dancing before the Lord, as music inspired and directed, till the ark was fixed in position. 1. *Misinterpreted by Michal.* She had no share in people's joy. Her heart not attuned to high devotion. The ceremony a foolish masquerade to her. A cold, unspiritual nature cannot understand enthusiasm, any more than an Icelander can understand tropical heat. 2. *Defended by himself* (cf. 2 Sam. vi. 21-23). In his procedure he had an eye to God's glory, from whom he received his kingdom, and before whom he ought to be judged. He did not lower himself in his own opinion—honoured with being on a level with the maids whom she despised. Honour with God more highly esteemed than honour with men (John xii. 43). David a noble example of firmness and enthusiasm for God.

"He put so much of heart into his act
That his example had a magnet's force."

MICHAL'S CONTEMPT.—Verse 29.

"One only incident tarnished its brightness. Michal, his wife, in the proud—we may almost say conservative spirit of the older dynasty, not without a thought of her father's fallen house (2 Sam. vi. 21), poured forth her contemptuous reproach on the king who had descended to the dances and songs of the Levitical procession. He, in reply, vowed an eternal separation, marking the intense solemnity which he attached to the festival" [*Stanley*]. 1. *Springing from pride.* She blamed him for exchanging royal robes for sacerdotal dress. He forgot his dignity, mixed with the common people, and put himself on a level with them. "Worldly hearts see nothing in actions of zeal but folly and madness" [*Bishop Hall*]. She could admire his valour, not his piety—the soldier, not the saint. 2. *Punished with barrenness.* "Michal had no child until the day of her death" (cf. 2 Sam. vi. 20-23). This a dishonour, the deepest humiliation for an oriental woman. She unjustly reproached David, and God put her to perpetual reproach. As we sow, we reap. "God hath still a barren womb for mocking Michal," says Trapp.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 25-28. *Sacred joy.* Its source, manifestations, and results. "All God's services must be performed with joy, or else they lose their lustre" [*Trapp*].

Ver. 29. Michal a type of many who despise devotion, enthusiasm, and liberality in the cause of God. "In the present day there is no lack of people like Michal. In the pure fire of the Spirit from on high these persons also see only a morbid fanaticism; in the most animated and vigorous expression of hallowed exultation of soul, a hypocritical display. The life from and in God remains a mystery to every

one until, through the Spirit of God Himself, it is unsealed to his *experience*" [*Krummacher*]. Learn—1. To be misunderstood, ridiculed, and opposed in God's service. 2. That a man's foes may be those of his own household. 3. To exercise true charity. Michal should have commended David; been less bitter and ironical in spirit. David calmly defended himself, and explained to Michal that he had regard to the glory of God in all his procedure. "Charity is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 3-24. Order in procession.

“The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, custom, in all line of order”
[Shakspeare].

Ver. 29. *The pride of Michal.* She was a king's daughter, with all the

haughty temper of her birth. She forgot that there was a greater king than Saul or David, before whom the princes of the earth are as vanity. It is the tree which stands high and alone that is in danger of being struck by lightning. Her soul, in its pride, was scorched by the fire of divine judgment [S. S. Magazine].

CHAPTER XVI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] In 2 Sam. vi. 17-23, only three verses and a clause parallel with this chapter.

Vers. 1-6.—*The ark lodged in tent.* After this event Levites entered upon their duties before the ark, instructed by David. *Blessed* (ver. 2) as head or father of the people. *Dealt* with remains of extensive thankofferings as in ancient royal hospitality. *Appointed* (ver. 4) Asaph and associates first company with cymbals; Zechariah and colleagues, with whom were conjoined Jeiel and seven others, in second company with lutes and harps.

Vers. 7-37.—*A psalm of thanksgiving.* First, the order of worship then appointed for first time. This special hymn prepared for the occasion. “The language is remarkably archaic, and there can be no reasonable doubt that it is in the main an extract from a record of the time of David” [Speak. Com.].

Vers. 8-10.—Thanksgiving (cf. Ps. cv. 1-15). *Wondrous* miracles. *His strength*, the ark called such (Ps. lxxviii. 61; cxxxii. 8) because strength shown by it at Jordan, Jericho, &c.

Vers. 11-13.—Call to seek the Lord. *Seed of Israel* (of Abraham in Ps. cv. 6).

Vers. 14-19.—Covenant with Abraham. *Mindful*, admonition. *Few*, literally men of number (Gen. xxxiv. 30).

Vers. 20-22.—Preservation when wandering. *Reproved* (Gen. xii. 17; xx. 3). *Anointed* as kings, and priests, and prophets (Ex. xix. 6).

Vers. 23-33.—God salvation of all nations (cf. Ps. xcvi.). *Gladness* (beauty); *place* (sanctuary); *kindreds* (ver. 28), generations and families. *Give* (ascribe); *offering* (ver. 29) in public worship. *Stable* (ver. 30), idea moral, not physical (Ps. xcvi. 10). *Sea* (Mediterranean); *fulness*, striking poetic figure. *Trees*, allusion to *Kirjath-jearim*, “the city of woods,” where the ark had rested.

Vers. 34-36.—This (ver. 24) verse is found at the commencement of Ps. cvii.; cviii.; and cxxxvi. It was the ordinary Jewish doxology, and may be regarded as closing the first or thanksgiving portion of the service, which is then followed by a short prayer (ver. 35), after which comes a second doxology [Speak. Com.]. Ver. 35. *Say* (not found in Ps. cvi. 47), a liturgical direction. *Deliver*, longing for freedom. *Amen* (ver. 36), a description of the manner in which the ceremony terminated.

Vers. 37-43.—Sequel, a description of appointment of musicians and their respective duties. *Brethren* (cf. ch. xxvi.). *Porters* (door-keepers). *Gibeon*. Hence two places where worship was performed in time of David. *Continually* (Ex. xxix. 38; Num. xxviii. 3-6). *Bless* (cf. 2 Sam. vi. 19, 20).

HOMILETICS.

THE INAUGURAL SERVICE.—Verses 1-6.

Stress here laid upon the fact that Asaph entered for the first time upon the duties assigned him, and that the order of worship appointed by David now com-

menced. **I. Service to commemorate an important event.** "The ark of God set in the midst of the tent." No longer in obscurity, nor in a private house, but fixed in the city, venerated as the centre and symbol of God's presence. In the accomplishment of any work, at the beginning of every new period in life, "thank and praise the Lord." **II. Service conjoined with sacred rites.** Rites significant and expressive, by which king and people acknowledged God's authority and sought his favour. 1. *Appropriate sacrifices.* "Offering the burnt offerings," by which victims were wholly presented and consumed. "They offered peace-offerings" in acknowledgment of God's favour. The former speaks of atonement (Lev. i. 3-9), the latter of reconciliation (Lev. iii. 1-5). One indicates complete self-surrender, the other thanksgiving to God. Grateful recognition of divine mercies and entire consecration to God's service reasonable, and required at all times. 2. *Earnest prayer.* David publicly blessed the people and besought continued help. Needful to petition for future, as well as to be thankful for past, mercies. 3. *Musical arrangement* (vers. 4-7). Levitical service of thanksgiving dates from this time. Music cultivated in the schools of the prophets and in the palace of the king now consecrated to the highest service, and constituted part of the worship of Jehovah. Music should not minister to debauchery and excess, but to gladness and praise. **III. Service connected with hospitality.** Devotion to God will lead us to think of man. When God blesses us we feel that we should distribute to others. A glad heart will open a wide hand. David's generosity was on a large scale. 1. *Suitable in variety.* "Bread," "flesh," and "wine." Flowers cannot grow in one element. Man requires variety; in body, animal and vegetable food, bread and water; in mind, something more than dogmas. In the house of God a table spread with boundless variety. 2. *Universal in application.* Women, a recognised place in the assembly, or not forgotten in their homes (*children*, says Josephus). Not merely to great men, but "he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel" (2 Sam. vi. 19). In that day the people fared well. "That they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Ezra ix. 22).

A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING.—Verses 7-22.

This a composite psalm, represents a form of service rather than a psalm. The whole of it, with slight variations, found in Pss. cv. 1-15; xevi.; and cvi. 47, 48. It celebrates redemption as unfolded in history of Israel, proclaimed to the world, and triumphant in judgment. This part sets forth—**I. An exhortation to the noblest work.** The work of praising God—a work in which our faculties find their vigorous, harmonious, and happy development—a work for which all rational and created beings are made. In three ways chiefly, is this duty recommended. 1. *In giving thanks to God* (ver. 8). Author of all benefits, therefore to him all gratitude and praise. (a) *By singing psalms* (ver. 9). Best thoughts in sweet sounds. "Sing unto him," not to please others or gratify self. (b) *By social conversation.* "Talk ye"—men love to speak and to hear of "wondrous works." Christians have plenty to talk about—themes interesting and inexhaustible. Wonders of grace, mercy, and providence. (c) *By glorying in his name* (ver. 10). A name above every name, full of wonder and reverence, untainted with lust and blood. A name in which we may boast without shame, and rejoice without fear. 2. *In seeking God.* Seek "his face" and "his strength," his favour and help. (a) *Seek earnestly.* The word repeated to stir us up—"seek, seek, seek." (b) *Seek joyfully.* Not in dulness and despair—in gladness of heart and cheerful hope. (c) *Seek continually* (ver. 11). Not by assembling occasionally in tabernacle or temple, not

by observance of external rites, but in constant fellowship, "for evermore." 3. *In commemorating God's works.* "Remember his marvellous works" (ver. 12). They are striking and impressive. Remember their nature, number, and design. What more could God have done for us? Yet how forgetful and ungrateful! **II. Motives to influence us in this noblest work.** The argument founded upon God's character and God's care for them from beginning of history to removal of ark. 1. *God's great love.* "The Lord God of Israel," "the Lord our God." A relation filial and unique. But Israel's election united to universality of Jehovah's reign, therefore he is the God, not of one, but of all nations—may be our God and Father. 2. *God's great manifestations of love.* In heaven above and earth beneath, among angels and men. Making and confirming his covenant, receiving offerings and worship in his sanctuary. "Glory and honour in his presence, strength and gladness in his place" (ver. 27). 3. *God's great dominion.* Maker of heaven and earth, Universal Sovereign; "above all gods," for "the gods of the people are idols," impotent and worthless—mere nonentities, for an idol is nothing; supreme in grandeur and government. 4. *God's great claims.* For creation, covenant mercies and protecting care. God has right to homage and praise. They are due to him. As children, we are bound to love him; as servants, to consult his will, declare his goodness, and advance his kingdom. 5. *God's vindication of these claims.* His rights can never be given to another. Men, however intelligent; gods, adorned with gold or silver, must never receive homage due to him. "He cometh to judge the earth." "He shall judge the people righteously;" "judge the world with righteousness and with truth."

THE SEEKER ENCOURAGED.—Verse 10.

Yet many believe, or pretend to believe, that religion is a joyless thing! The *heart* has very little, if any, share in other enjoyments, which only gratify appetites, strike senses, and charm imagination. But where is the heart? Even in laughter the *heart* is sorrowful; the end of that mirth is heaviness. In religion the heart finds relief, repose, satisfaction, and joy. "Let the heart of them that rejoice *seek* the Lord." There are three reasons for this. *First*, because it is an evidence of grace. They may conclude against themselves, refuse to be comforted; but no man can seek to know, enjoy, and serve God from mere nature. Actions may not indicate the state of mind, but desires spring from it. We may be forced to do, but cannot be compelled to prefer and choose. *Secondly*, because their success is sure. This the case in no other pursuit. In fields of worldly labour we spend our strength for nought. A rival may bear off a prize which we have long been chasing, at the very moment we are seizing it. The cup of enjoyment, filled with eager hope, is often dashed to the ground from the very lip that touches it. But their heart *shall* live that seek God. "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall *doubtless* return again," &c. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Is there unfaithfulness in God? Did he ever say to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye in vain?" *Thirdly*, because, when they have found, their aim and wish in seeking are fully answered. All they desire is treasured up in him, and they that seek the Lord shall not want *any* good thing. The wise man tells us of success in other cases. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit"—vexation if we miss, and vanity if we gain. To one of these alternatives we are inevitably subjected. We must be disappointed in acquiring them, and this often the case; or in possessing them, and this always the case. Everything earthly falls short of hope, but impossible to form adequate expectation of the riches of glory of the inheritance in the saints. What to have God himself for

our possession and exceeding joy! To be blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ! To realise happiness which solitude increases, trouble improves, and death perfects! "Eye hath not seen," &c. While thus the heart of them that seek rejoices, the heart of others should be induced to seek him. He invites you to seek, therefore "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" [*Jay*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 7-11. *Holy duties.* "Give thanks—call upon—make known—sing—talk—glory ye."

Ver. 11. To seek his *face* is to desire his presence, smile, and favour consciously enjoyed. First we seek *him*, then his *strength*, and then his *face*; from the personal reverence we pass on to the imparted power, and then to the conscious favour. This seeking must never cease, the more we know the more we seek to know. Finding him, we must "our minds inflame to seek him more and more." He seeks spiritual worshippers, and spiritual worshippers seek him; they are therefore sure to meet face to face ere long [*Spurgeon*]. *Threefold seeking.* 1. The Lord for mercy. 2. His strength for service. 3. His face for happiness [*A. G. Brown*].

Vers. 12-15. *Subjects of Remembrance.* Marvellous works God has done, and wonderful judgments (words) God has uttered. Or—1. God's faith-

fulness. "He hath remembered his covenant" (Ps. cv. 8). 2. Our mindfulness of this faithfulness. "Remember" (ver. 12), "Be mindful" (ver. 15). "If the Lord keeps his promise in memory, surely we ought not to forget the wonderful manner in which he performs it. To us it should be matter of deepest joy, that never in any instance has the Lord been unmindful of his covenant engagements, nor will he be so, world without end. O that we were as mindful of them as he is!" [*Spurgeon*].

Vers. 12-15. 1. The operations of divine providence. Acts wonderful, beneficent, and memorable, comprehending the mightiest and most insignificant creatures. 2. The notice which should be taken of these operations. Amid displays of power and beauty we should not be deaf nor blind, but attentive, appreciative, and apt to learn. We should remember, relate, &c.

HOMILETICS.

THE NATIONAL COVENANT.—Verses 15-22.

Its nature, blessings, and contracting parties all specially set forth. Learn—**I. That God's method of intercourse with men has ever been in the form of a covenant.** A covenant is generally defined as an agreement between two parties, on certain terms—a conditional and a promissory; one to be performed and the other to be fulfilled. This method of divine procedure in Adam and Christ. God requires from us faith and obedience, then he will give life and salvation. In old time ever reminded of this by symbol and sacrifice. Hence "the books of the covenant," "the ark of the covenant," "the blood of the covenant," and "the tables of the covenant." "The old covenant" and "the new covenant." We must acknowledge God. "There is no religion without this idea of covenant with a personal God, and therefore all such views as those of Comte, Mill, and Spencer are, for all moral and religious purposes, wholly atheistical" [*Taylor Lewis*]. **II. That this covenant method of intercourse with men displays the sovereign will and free grace of God.** Man not disposed, not able

to make an agreement with his Maker. God might have left man in his guilty condition, without promise, hope, or mercy. But God graciously condescended to pledge his word and bestow his grace in Christ. Adam failed, in Christ everlasting life secured. In scripture everything is traced to the sovereign grace and mere good pleasure of God. Not to merit, foreseen belief, and holiness, but "according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise and glory of his grace" (Eph. i. 5). **III. That this covenant method of intercourse puts men under deep obligation to God.** Rightly viewed, it affords no ground of complaint or despair, but for submission and hope. 1. *They are chosen to great favours.* "His chosen ones." Elected, exalted in mind, character, and destiny. 2. *They should render thanks for these favours.* Never be slow to acknowledge debt and praise God for his mercy. He ceases not to be good, cease not to be grateful. **IV. The obligations of men to God for his covenant mercies can never cease.** As long as we exist we depend upon God and should praise God. He never ignores his claims, nor alters his covenant. 1. *It is of divine authority.* Higher, more sacred, more certain than the law of man. 2. *It is confirmed from time to time.* Made with Abraham, confirmed to Jacob, established with Noah (literally, made to stand, Gen. vi. 18), not because impaired, changed, or destroyed in itself. But it had been broken and forgotten—like something which had fallen down, it needed repetition and prominence. Hence 3. *It is "an everlasting covenant"* (ver. 17). To last as long as moral government through the ages of the world. "Made with man as an immortal being, and in itself an evidence of his designed immortality." *A covenant of eternity* (Is. xxiv. 5).

THE INFANT NATION.—Verses 6–22.

If interesting to trace some mighty river from its source to its entrance into the sea, some magnificent building from foundation to its topstone, what to trace the beginning and watch the progress of God's people! Early incidents and history briefly given. **I. The humble origin of the nation.** Numbers noisy, attract, and commend. Israel "few, even a few" (very few, Ps. cv. 12), lit. men of number, who could be counted at first; but "the fewest of all people" gradually increased and made numerous as the sands and the stars. Small churches, poverty of members, no barriers to God. **II. The wonderful preservation of the nation.** Few, unsettled and helpless Israel ever exposed and kept. 1. *In their journeys.* Migrating from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people. They were not lost, nor prevented from ending their journeys. "The Lord guided them on every side." 2. *Amidst their enemies.* In Egypt, Philistia, and Canaan, the heirs of promise secure. This not by forbearance of neighbours, for many sought to injure and destroy, to cut off root and branch, but "He suffered no man to do them wrong, &c." **III. The rich inheritance of the nation.** "The lot of your inheritance" (ver. 18). 1. *Not gained by their own skill.* "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, &c." (Ps. xlv. 3). 2. *Bestowed by divine appointment.* "The lot of your inheritance." God planted and enriched them in gratuitous and sovereign favour. "He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents" (Ps. lxxviii. 55). **IV. The high destiny of the nation.** Blessed and exalted above all others. 1. *In their special relation to God.* "Children and chosen ones;" bound to imitate their father in fervent prayer, holy faith, and obedience. If God sets his choice upon us, let us be more devout and zealous than others. "A people near unto him." 2. *In their elevation to bless others.* Not put into Canaan to be secluded and shut up from

intercourse with other nations, but to bless them. Israel a missionary people, gave a Bible and a Saviour to the world. "To make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, in name, and in honour."

EVILDOING RESTRAINED.—*Verses 19-22.*

I resolve the words into three parts. 1. Here is the nearness and dearness of the saints unto God. They are dearer to him than kings and states, simply considered; that is, otherwise than as they in their persons are also saints; for you see for their sakes he reproved kings, and so showeth that he preferreth them to kings. 2. Here is the great danger to kings and states to deal with his saints otherwise than well. It appeareth many ways; for he doth not only in words give a charge not to touch them, but he carries it in a high way (for so God will do when he pleads their cause). Touch them not; as if he had said, Let me see if you dare so much as touch them; and it is with an intimation of the highest threatening if they should; upon your peril if you do so; for that is the scope of such a speech. In deeds he made this good; not that he did altogether prevent all wrong and injuries, for they received many as they went through those lands; but at no time did he let it go unpunished. He plagued Pharaoh for Abraham's wife's sake (Gen. xii.), and also Abimelech (Gen. xx. 3). 3. Here is the care and protection which God had over them, set and amplified—(1) By the number and condition of the persons whom he defended; though "*few men in number*," that is, soon reckoned, for their power and strength, a few, or very small, as Septuagint. (2) By what he did for them. He suffered no man, however great, to do them wrong, however small, not without recompense and satisfaction. Though the people had an ill eye at them (Gen. xxvi. 11), God caused Abimelech to make a law on purpose, and to charge all his people in Isaac's behalf, and spake in the very words of the text, "He that toucheth this man or his wife shall be put to death" [*Thomas Goodwin*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 19-22. 1. *The condition of Israel.* Few, very few, strangers and migrating. Men of number, accounted unworthy, not distinguished by external dignity and power, as Rome marks her communicants. Humblest parts of communities, but honoured of God. 2. *The estimation in which they are held.* God's anointed kings and priests, ordained to reign with Christ. God's

prophets to declare and set forth his will. 3. *The protection which they enjoyed.* To them intrusted the word of life, preserved to the world. To them a safe passport to accomplish God's design among men.

Vers. 20-22. 1. God's people may often be removed. 2. They can never be injured. 3. God's property in them will never be renounced [*Spurgeon*].

HOMILETICS.

THE GREATNESS OF JEHOVAH.—*Verses 23-33.*

These verses, like Psalm xevi., celebrate Jehovah's greatness. Great in essence and supremacy; great in mercy and dominion. All who hear and know this greatness are to tell it to others, that heaven and earth may rejoice in his reign.

I. Jehovah's transcendent greatness. 1. *He is the only true God.* "The gods of the people are idols," images in wood or stone, vanities and nothings. 2. *He is the Creator of the world.* "The Lord made the heavens."

His Godhead, proved by his works, chief of which is the architecture of heaven, whose lamps shine, and whose rain falls upon all mankind. 3. *He is glorious in operations.* His works are "marvellous." No petty deity presiding over one nation, or one department of nature. Great in power and act, infinitely to be adored. Earthly potentates count themselves famous and strong. "God alone is great," Massillon declared, and imperial majesties bowed their heads. **II. Jehovah must be worshipped on account of his greatness.** "Worship the Lord." Tribes and families called to honour him in his courts. "All worship be to God only" is a fit motto of a city company. 1. *By submitting to his authority.* No worship without submission. Recognise his claims and authority. Give him "the glory and strength" of intellect, heart, and life. 2. *By presenting our gifts.* Sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving springing from humble submission; gifts of money and effort prompted by love. To him who gives all, we should gladly "bring an offering and come into his courts." "None of you shall appear before me empty." 3. *By a true spirit.* God looks not at architecture and apparel. Worship must not be sinful and superficial; but reverent and sincere. (a) *In the beauty of holiness.* "Purity is the white linen of the Lord's choristers," says Spurgeon, "righteousness is the comely garment of his priests, holiness is the royal apparel of his servitors." (b) *In profoundest awe.* "Fear (tremble) before him, all the earth" (Ps. xevi. 9). Jehovah no earthly sovereign, but clothed in omnipotent grandeur. Dread of idols, mere superstition. Holy fear the spirit of true religion. **III. Heathen nations shall know and recognise Jehovah's greatness.** "Declare his glory among the heathen" (ver. 24). The name of God dishonoured by heathen idolatry, vices, and cruelties. But they shall hear of his wonders of grace and mercy. The duty, the privilege of the church to tell them. A truly loyal and living church will resolve to publish salvation to the ends of the earth. **IV. The world shall rejoice in the reign of the great Jehovah.** "Say among the nations, The Lord reigneth" (ver. 31). 1. *Joy in heaven.* "Let the heavens be glad." 2. *Joy in earth.* "Let the earth rejoice." 3. *Joy in which all creatures shall participate.* "The sea, no more troubled over shipwrecked mariners, and rehearsing grief of widows and orphans, shall adopt a cheerful note." The *fields* shall rejoice in culture, abundant harvests, and freedom from rapine. The *trees of the wood*, no longer sheltering horrid cruelty, shall "sing out at the presence" of God in the retirement and devotion of men. "These verses are full of comprehensive beauty and power. They present the gathering together of everything under the confessed dominion of the reigning Christ. Things in heaven, as well as things on earth, rejoice together in the acknowledged blessing of the Lord of peace. The Psalm is throughout a very sweet strain of millennial prophecy" [*Athur Pridham*].

* The truth that David learned to sing,
Its deep fulfilment here attains.

* Tell all the earth the Lord is King!

Lo, from the cross a King he reigns!" [*Mrs. Charles*].

THE BEAUTIFUL PLACE.—Verses 27-29.

Place, abode of the ark, the tabernacle and temple, apply to the sanctuary; public worship in God's house. **I. Beautified by God's presence.** God pleased to locate his presence of old. "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Here "glory and honour" are constant attendants. In God combined, not in outward show and parade, all that is mighty and lovely, powerful and resplendent. Displays of mercy and love "beautify the place of his sanctuary and make the place of his feet glorious." **II. Beautified by**

attractive services. 1. *Cheerful song.* "Sing unto the Lord." No dismal rites celebrated; no bacchanalian shouts heard; mourning turned into joy. Singing a fitting expression of love, a reverent method of worship. 2. *Free-will offerings.* No part given reluctantly, but gladly. Offerings responsive signs and inspiring examples to fellow-worshippers. 3. *Spiritual fervour.* In Ps. xvi. we have a triple call, "sing . . . sing . . . sing." No discordant note, no voice silent. Jew and Gentile, heaven and earth should join. The sacred fire of praise should burn and bless in perpetual flame. **III. Beautified by loyal attendants.** The house of God the centre of joys and fellowships. 1. *Regular in attendance.* They "come before him," habitually, punctually, and reverently; do not forget to assemble themselves together as the manner of some, but resolve "we will not forsake the house of our God." 2. *Mindful of its interests.* They bring their offerings, respond to its claims, contribute to its support, and encourage its enterprises. 3. *Obedient to its rules.* Law everywhere, and should be decency and order in God's house. "In beauty of holiness," a certain prescribed attire like splendid robes of ancient priests; or in right form and spirit, "in holy reverence" [*Boothroyd*]. Holiness in thought and heart required. Repeated and solemn warnings on this point. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me."

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP — *Verses 28, 29.*

I. It is due to God. "The glory due unto his name." 1. *It is right.* However much we adore we cannot give more than he deserves. All honour, natural and reasonable, due to him as Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer. 2. *It is acceptable.* Though not enriching, yet well pleasing to him. "Whosoever offereth praise glorifieth me." **II. It befits our moral nature.** Man made to worship, the only creature capable of it. 1. *It meets our aspirations.* We long for God, restless and dissatisfied without him, ever display anxiety to find him. "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." 2. *It satisfies our wants.* Nothing but a personal God will do this. We feel for a *living* God. No sympathy with force, nor adoration of mere law. A senseless power satisfies no social or religious instincts, draws out no song or psalm. "My soul *thirsteth* for God, for the living God." 3. *It dignifies our character.* "In beauty of holiness." It detaches from earth and sin, gives *beauty* to contemplate, *strength* to imitate, and *fear* to humble and guide. Fellowship with God most holy and most exalting. "It is good for me to draw near to God."

A GRAND PROSPECT.—*Verses 30-33.*

Here find a splendid prospect for the heathen, "a grand missionary hymn" for the Christian Church! **I. Jehovah reigns supremely.** "The Lord reigneth." No abstract principle, no blind force nor law rules the world. Infinite and unchangeable, absolute and independent, almighty and supreme—the fountain of all being, filling heaven and earth with splendour. **II. The reign of Jehovah a cause of joy to the world.** "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of isles be glad." 1. *It is a reign of righteousness.* Others tyrannical and oppressive have produced injustice, bloodshed, and terror. Truth and justice conspicuous everywhere in his dominions, shines bright as stars in heaven. "The heavens declare (put before us, in our sight) his righteousness" (Ps. cxvii. 6). 2. *A reign of moral stability.* "The world," shaken with revolutions, impaired with sin, "shall be

stable," settled in government and free from invasions, "that it be not moved." Society is safe, social and political order secure where Christ is supreme. 3. *A reign of purity.* Idolatry shall cease, peace prevail, the earth purified; blessed with the presence and delivered by the grace of Messiah. On this account earth may rejoice and heaven be glad. "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

THE CLOSING PRAYER AND DOXOLOGY.—*Verses 35, 36.*

God's mercy had commenced deliverance, encouragement is given to pray for its completion. The prayer is based upon the promise, Deut. xxx. 3, and is a psalm of thanksgiving for its prospective accomplishment.

I. The Prayer. 1. *In its spirit.* Earnest, humble, and sincere. 2. *In its purpose.* (a) For deliverance. "Save us and deliver us." (b) For unity. "Gather us together." (c) For gratitude. "To give thanks to thy holy name." No longer a scattered people, but united in God's courts to triumph in praise. God's people a prayerful people, saved, united, and grateful to God for his goodness. Hence—**II. The Doxology.** 1. Praise to God *as their God.* "The Lord God of Israel." 2. Praise *universal.* "Let all the people say, Amen." 3. Praise *continual.* "For ever and ever." God blessed from eternity, will be through eternity, let him be praised without intermission, "from everlasting to everlasting."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 23–33. *A song of praise.*
 1. Setting forth God's excellencies. Creator, Ruler, and majestic. Claiming homage and service as due to his great name. 2. Asserting God's supremacy in the world. "Above all gods," overruling physical nature and social communities for the welfare of men. 3. Predicting God's universal kingdom. Triumphant over evil and bringing universal joy.

Vers. 23, 24. Notice—I. The end desired. To see the earth singing unto the Lord and blessing his name. II. The means suggested. The showing forth his salvation from day to day; declaring his glory, &c. III. The certainty of its accomplishment. The Lord hath said it. "O sing, &c." When he commands, earth must obey [*Treasury of David*]. I. Declare among the heathen the glory of God's perfections, that they may acknowledge him as the true God. II. Declare the glory of his salvation, that they may accept him as their only Redeemer. III. Declare the glory of his providence, that they may confide in him as their

faithful guardian. IV. Declare the glory of his word, that they may prize it as their chief treasure. V. Declare the glory of his service, that they may choose it as their chief occupation. VI. Declare the glory of his residence, that they may seek it as their best home [*William Jackson*].

Vers. 28, 29. *The claims of God to the worship and homage of his creatures.* What I have to demonstrate is—
 I. That God is entitled to the homage of his creatures, and claims it as proper and right. II. That these claims are made upon *us*, his intelligent creatures. It will therefore be necessary to show that we are capable of knowing God to all the extent necessary to excite in our minds the feelings of awe, reverence, and admiration, since these are essential to homage and worship. Also to prove that such claims are not only reasonable, but founded in justice and right. III. That the worship and homage required is such, that it not only does not degrade, but elevates the man that pays it; that it is not the hard requirement of despotism, but the

righteous claim of infinite excellence, not the service of flattery and servility, the free-will offering of a discerning and admiring mind [*J. Robinson*].

Ver. 29. *The beauty of holiness.* The religion of the gospel of Christ is "the beauty of holiness," as it concerns its Author, its plan, its fruits. 1. As it concerns its *Author*. Whatever we can understand as meant by beauty or holiness, we see in the attributes of God, whether we consider them in all their harmony, or contemplate any one of them in particular. 2. As to its *plan*. Survey the gospel where we will, or regard whatever we can that is revealed concerning it, we find it to be all "*beauty*;" and we cannot call it by a more appropriate name than "*the beauty of holiness*." 3. As to its *fruits*. There is a holy separation, a beautiful

character of holiness, a separation as to character, feelings, and conduct; these are all the various fruits of grace; and so the man becomes beautiful in holiness [*Legh Richmond, 1772-1827*].

Ver. 34. Thanks for divine goodness. I. God its source. II. Displayed in suitable ways. Mercy to the miserable. III. Lasting in its nature. Outweighing sin and rebellion. "Endureth for ever."

Ver. 36. *The people's amen.* 1. Indicating attention, appreciation, and interest in the service. 2. A solemn sealing. Ratification and acceptance of what has been done. 3. A real duty. The people to respond (not the minister merely) with hearty and universal voice. "Amen so be it."

HOMILETICS.

MINISTRY BEFORE THE ARK.—*Verses 37-42.*

The sequel of this chapter describes the arrangement of services, appointment of musicians and porters, with their respective duties. **I. An orderly service.** Asaph and his brethren officiated as singers; Obed-edom and Hossah served as doorkeepers, each in his place and in his time. "Order gave each thing view" [*Shaks.*]. **II. A musical service.** This chiefly at Gibeon, where Heman and Jeduthun presided over the sacred music. In both places "musical instruments of God" used. **III. A cheerful service.** "To give thanks to the Lord." It becomes the redeemed to praise God. The greater, more numerous God's blessings, the greater honour and service we should feel are due to him. "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." **IV. A perpetual service.** At Jerusalem before the ark, ministry was "continually as every day's work required" (ver. 37). At the altars at Gibeon, priests attended, incense burnt "continually, morning and evening." A permanent local ministry and regular choir are established, in fixed place and due order. Prayer and praise should ever be kept up in God's house, and in our own hearts and lives. "His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 43. *David's attention to his household.* Personal religion was exemplified by David. I. By the work in which he had been engaged. 1. It was a glorious work. 2. It had been performed in a manner most acceptable to God. II. By the work to which he returned. He returned to bless his house, that is—1. To obtain blessing for them by prayers. 2. To

render himself a blessing by his conduct. Consider (1) How highly we are privileged. (2) How we should improve our privileges [*C. Simeon, M.A.*]. He that had "blessed the people" (v. 18) returns to "bless his household" (v. 20). Piety in public and in private—public worship and family worship. A good man after public religious duties, returns joyous,

thankful, and loving to his house (*cf.* Lange, 2 Sam. vi. 20). Ministers must not think that their public performances will excuse them from family worship; but when they have blessed the public assembly they are to return and

bless their own households. And none is too great to do this. It is the work of angels to worship God; and therefore certainly can be no disparagement to the greatest of men [*Benson*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 4-7. *With harps.* The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect that music has on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that [*Carlyle*]. Like her friend *Mdlle. Janotha*, Jenny Lind believed her art was the gift of God, and to be dedicated to his service. "I have always put him first," said she, in her last illness [*Church Worker*].

Vers. 8-11. The Psalmist speaks of singing to the name of the Lord, blessing, extolling, thanksgiving, exalting (*cf.* vers. 28-31). Just as the stem which is full of sap throws out many branches, so the believer who is full of a spirit of praise will give vent to it in many different forms [*P. B. Power*].

Ver. 26. The Lord made the heavens. This verse is a notandum. What a tribute to astronomy is it that the Lord is so often done homage to as having made the heavens! Let the

theology of nature be blended with the theology of conscience—a full recognition of the strength and the glory which shine palpably forth in the wonders of creation, with the spiritual offerings of holy worship and holy service [*Thomas Chalmers*].

Vers. 32-38. *Sea roar, and trees of the wood sing.*

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops,
ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship
wave" [*Milton*].

Vers. 34-36. *For ever.* A line of praise is worth a leaf of prayer, and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning [*J. Livingstone*]. It was the law in some of the old monasteries that the chanting of praise should never be interrupted, and that one choir of monks should relieve another in the holy service [*Bib. Museum*].

CHAPTER XVII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter coincides with 2 Sam. vii.—records David's purpose to build a house for God (vers. 1, 2), and Nathan's approval. God refuses to permit this, promises a perpetual kingdom in David's line (vers. 3-15); grateful response to this promise (vers. 16-27).

Vers. 1, 2.—*David's purpose.* *Sat* in splendour and rest. *Curtains* as a common tent. David probably fancied the time predicted (Deu. xii. 10, 11) had come. *Nathan* followed his own impulse, and fell into mistakes like others (1 Sam. xvi. 6; 2 Kings iv. 27).

Vers. 3-15.—*God's refusal and promise.* *Thou* (ver. 4), Hebrew emphatic, "Not thou shalt build," but some one else. *Tent to tent* (ver. 5). "I was walking in a tent and in a dwelling," from one place to another travelling and resting with his people. *Judges*, suitable antithesis to David. *Cedars*, costly materials. David elevated from low condition—"sheepcotes," rude structures of mud walls—to govern Israel (ver. 7). *Name* (ver. 8) as warrior and king. *Place* (ver. 9) fixed. Settled kingdom, constant changes before. *House* (ver. 10), a family, a line of successors. Ver. 11. *Go*, promise now personal. *Seed* indefinite, not yet known which son. Vers. 12-14 refer to Solomon, and faithfully fulfilled to him. *Mercy*, alluding to Saul. *Evermore* (2 Sam. vii. 16).

Vers. 16-27.—*David's prayer and thanksgiving*, which indicates teaching of deep significance and far-reaching promise. *Sat* (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 18-29). *House*, dynasty, family—*i.e.*, from David onward in remote future. *Knowest* (ver. 18), therefore no necessity for further expression of gratitude [*Keil*]. *Servants* for thy word's sake (2 Sam. vii.). *Heart*, all attributed to divine mercy. *Let be estab.* (ver. 24). Rather "And let thy name be established and magnified for ever;" that is to say, Let not only thy promise stand firm, but let thy name also stand firm (continue to be held in honour) and be magnified, &c. [*Speak. Com.*]. *To bless* (ver. 27), it hath pleased thee (margin). "*For thou, O Lord, hast blessed it, and may it be blessed for ever*" (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 29).

HOMILETICS.

THE KING'S PROPOSAL.—*Verses 1-10.*

David had established worship on its proper basis, reorganised the priesthood, and introduced music, yet not content. Gods of other nations had splendid temples, why not adorn Jerusalem with a house for God which should be the emblem of the nation's consecration?

I. David's proposal. "All that is in thine heart." 1. *A noble purpose.* To build a house for God. Good to erect asylums and benevolent institutions, more useful to help to build houses for God. Such work needful, must be done, and greatly appreciated. He "hath built us a synagogue." 2. *A generous purpose.* "I dwell in an house of cedars, &c." He felt ashamed of the contrast between his house and the house of God. One substantial and costly, the other only a tent. Impropriety, injustice, and dishonour for him to have more costly surroundings than the ark of God. God should always have our best. Many have "an house of cedar" for worldly life—best talents, most time and money, keenest insight for business, but only meagre remnants for God. 3. *A purpose commended by the prophet.* Nathan here introduced for first time. The king opened his mind to him. Purpose reasonable, he commended it. "Do all, &c." (ver. 2). But holy prophets did not know God's will until revealed to them; often spoke as religious men, from human aspects, and found out their error. Kings and prophets have need to consult God.

II. God's disapproval of David's proposal. God not displeased with intention, did not condemn nor entirely reject, but forbade David to build. "Thou shalt not build" (ver. 4). 1. *God knows all our purposes.* David's known "the same night" it was formed. He sees the heart and reads our inmost thoughts; knows whether our desires are mean or generous towards his house. "The Lord looketh on the heart." A sincere heart better than finest gold, a beautiful life more than cedar. 2. *God often hinders the accomplishment of our purposes.* They may be selfish and not for his glory. We may ignore God in forming them. "If the Lord will, ye should say." God may seek to save us from spiritual pride and self-dependence; to increase reverence, faith, and purity; to withhold one thing to give a better. "Often times I purposed to come unto you, but was let (hindered) hitherto" (Rom. i. 13). "My purposes are broken off" (Job xvii. 11).

III. Reasons for God's disapproval of David's proposal. Some given here and others found elsewhere. 1. *It was something entirely new.* No such building had ever existed, perhaps not possible in Israel's wanderings; nor had God ever commanded the erection of a temple as he did the tabernacle. No suggestion had been given to tribe, judge, or leader. God had shared the pilgrim lot and unsettledness of his people. 2. *It was untimely in its beginning.* Time for building not yet. Present condition of the people not fit, must be improved. They were surrounded by hostile nations, had no permanent rest, therefore God's sanctuary must still be a tent. Not in David's reign, but in Solomon's must plan be accomplished. God's time always best. We delay, act before the time, or become too hasty in plan and purpose. Enter upon great engagements

with much thought and prayer. 3. *David was not the right man to build.* War a necessary evil in his life. The temple, significant of peace, must not be built by a man of war. Kings in Middle Ages desired to atone for a wicked life by erection of a church or monastery. God will choose his own men and fix his own terms. "Thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight" (1 Chr. xxii. 8; 2 Chr. ii. 3).

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 3-6. *Nathan's message.* 1. Its form. "All this vision" (ver. 15). 2. Its contents, showing that God seeks to correct mistakes of his servants, that he alone is fit judge of what is pleasing to him, and that not even a prophet must step in between.

Ver. 5. *From tent to tent.* Not like heathen gods, confined to localities, and carried about from place to place. The Heb. *Mithallek* a travelling God. An active, constant companion of his people, going when they go, resting when they tent. Learn—1. God's condescension. 2. God's providence. 3. God's help in all its adaptations to camp or tent, synagogue or city. Happy in mean accommodations if God be with us!

Vers. 5, 6. *God's house in relation to man's condition.* 1. It is not required by God himself. The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands (Acts vii. 4), neither worshipped with men's hands (Acts xvii. 24). Hence the purity and spirituality of Bible religion. Other religions mean in thought, indicate that God needs temples and gifts. 2. It is required only by man, as a dependent spiritual being, craving for God, for a "tabernacle of witness," that God concerns himself with man, and will hearken to prayer. God's dwelling-place the human heart; not sacred groves, consecrated temples, or grand cathedrals.

"Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost."

Vers. 9, 10. *Israel's well-being from God.* 1. A place appointed for them. So for us in habitations and Christian work. 2. Settlement in the appointed place. "I will plant" as a tree, and they shall grow (a) without disturbance. "Children of wickedness shall waste," afflict, or injure them no more; (b) without termination. "Shall be moved no more," at least until important ends are answered. "These gradually advancing manifestations of the Lord's favour to David look to the well-being of the people of Israel. (1) He thereby prepared a place for them; that is, by subduing their enemies, made room for a safe, unendangered expansion in the promised land; (2) Planted them; that is, on the soil thus cleansed and made safe He established a firm, deep-rooted national life; (3) They dwell in their (own) place, their life-power unfolds itself within the limits secured them by the Lord; (4) They shall no longer be affrighted by restless enemies. In these words the discourse turns to the future of the people. The sense is: after all these manifestations of favour in the past up to this time, the Lord will for the future assure his people a position and an existence, wherein they shall no more experience the affliction and oppression that they suffered from godless nations" [Lange].

HOMILETICS.

GOD IN PERSONAL LIFE.—Verses 7, 8, and 11.

God's grace wonderfully magnified in David's history. Every age and every nation its prominent men with special mission, proving the possibilities of personal life and the providence of God in their development. **I. God**

elevates men from the lowest to the highest station in life. David, "from the sheepcote to the throne;" Amos, from flocks of Tekoah to prophetic office; fishermen, from their nets to be heralds of the gospel. History full of illustrations of God selecting, qualifying, and in due time raising men to fill their place as reformers, preachers, and rulers. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." **II. God helps men to do the work for which they are elevated.** This special work not left undone. No failure in God's plans. "Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it." 1. *By his constant presence.* "I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked." David, Daniel, Luther never left to themselves. 2. *By continual victories.* Much opposition to overcome. If God with us, opposition disarmed; "enemies cut off." None can prevent us rising, none frustrate our work. "I will work, and who shall let (hinder) it?" (undo it. *Horsley*) (Is. xliii. 13). "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" (xiv. 27). **III. God honours men for faithful performance of the work to which they are elevated.** David greatly honoured in his own life and that of his posterity. 1. *Honoured in reputed life.* "Made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth." Names are made, as well as fortunes, by God. Many ambitious for a name, but get one of ill-repute. Love of fame, not love of virtue; often becomes a passion, and tramples on the rights of humanity and sheds innocent blood. Byron sought fame, pronounced it worthless: "'tis nothing but cold snow." "A good name rather to be chosen"—renders more useful and gains more respect—"than great riches." This we may register in the annals of the Church and "in the book of life." 2. *Honoured in peaceful death.* "When thy days be expired, thou must go to be with thy fathers" (ver. 11). Days gradually drawing to an end. Then go to lie with thy fathers (Deut. xxxi. 16). Death a sleep, quiet and peaceful to the Christian. Not "an eternal sleep"! A family gathering hereafter, "with thy fathers." As Strafford disrobed and prepared himself for the block, he said, "I thank God that I am nowise afraid of death, nor am daunted with any terrors; but do as cheerfully lay down my head at this time as ever I did when going to repose."

GOD'S PROMISES TO DAVID.—Verses 11–15.

More given to David than acceptance of his proposal. The spiritual superior to the material. The political throne falls, but a kingdom is established for ever. Here are three things chiefly—I. **The erection of the house of God by the seed of David.** Seed raised up, one of his sons should succeed him and build. David lived on in Solomon, who used the materials his father collected, and carried out the plans that his father suggested. Death never cuts off the influence nor destroys the work of a good man. "When thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13). **II. The elevation of David's seed to sonship with God.** "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." God a father to Solomon in early life and reign. Tender love and providential care ever displayed. Mercy not taken from him as from Saul. He became popular, wealthy, and wise. What a privilege to take the place and receive the honour of sons! In bestowment of the blessing a display of love and grace beyond expression, and calls forth admiration from all who partake. "Behold what manner of love, &c." **III. The establishment of everlasting**

dominion in David's seed. Promise added to promise, embracing present and all future time. "God's thoughts not as our thoughts." David dies, Solomon succeeds, the family prospered and remained in power 400 years; but "his throne shall be established for evermore" in the Messiah, David's seed and son.

DAVID'S RECEPTION OF THE NEWS.—*Verses 16-27.*

David sat before the Lord in waiting attitude and devout meditation; received the message from Nathan with admiring wonder, and petitioned for its accomplishment in himself, family, and kingdom. **I. In grateful praise.** "The content of this thanksgiving prayer is like a clear glass, wherein we see into the innermost depths of David's heart. His soul wholly taken up with the divine revelation and promise, expresses itself in the utterances which follow one another quickly, in accordance with internal excitement of feeling." 1. *In spirit of deep humility.* "Who am I?" (ver. 16). An expression of deep feeling of nothingness in contrast to God's greatness and goodness. Divine loftiness and human lowliness (*cf.* Ps. viii. 5; cxliv. 3). 2. *In astonishment for personal favours* (vers. 17-19). (a) Favour to his house. (b) Favour for the future. If unworthy to receive former mercies, how should I feel in regard to promises reaching in the far future—"a great while to come"? Silence most befitting and eloquent, for language fails to express feeling. "What can David speak more?" 3. *In adoration of God's greatness* (vers. 20, 21). He is great; the incomparable God—"none like thee"; the only God—none "beside thee." Let his attributes and lovingkindness awaken our gratitude and praise; prompt us to adore his excellence and glory. 4. *In remembrance of national mercies.* David passes from present blessings to review the past—"rises from his personal experience to the whole line of God's glorious manifestations in the history of his people" (*Hengs.*). Israel the only nation redeemed by its God. This redemption incomparable and peculiar, an act which separated them, and made them independent. Deeds of "greatness and terribleness" followed. Nations expelled to make room for Israel, whom he claimed as specially his own, adopted them that he "might become their God." **II. In earnest prayer** (vers. 23-27). Connected with thanksgiving for present and past, David prays for the future. 1. *For the fulfilment of the promise.* "Do as thou hast said." Royal dignity set up, "establish it for ever." Everlasting continuance promised, let the word become deed. 2. *For the glorification of God's name.* This the design or consequence of the fulfilled word. Not the honour of his house, not the glory of his people, but solely the honour of God had David in view. 3. *For the continuance of the blessing.* The blessing secures the continuance. Neither posterity nor power without this. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (literally, its builders labour in vain in it) (Ps. cxxvii. 1). Needful to pray for families, temples, and churches. "Let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, &c." (ver. 27).

THE GREATNESS OF DIVINE FAVOURS.—*Verses 16-19.*

We briefly fill up an adapted sketch from Lange (2 Sam. vii. 18). **I. They infinitely surpass human desert.** "Who am I, and what is mine house?" David's gifts and graces eminent, his honour, success, and reputation great. His house of the royal tribe, and allied to the best families, but no worthiness in family or head. **II. They fill all times from remotest past to distant future.** "For a great while to come." From beginning

of David's reign to end of the world, through David's seed. From the fall of man to his redemption in glory. **III. They spring from sovereign mercy.** "According to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness." People made great not by their own deeds, but by works which God in free sovereign mercy performs for and in them. **IV. They are beyond all human comprehension.** What can David say more? (v. 18). Words cannot express our obligations, and even a sense of obligation. As heaven is high above the earth, so are God's thoughts above our thoughts.

TRUE PRAYER.—Verses 23-27.

Founded upon God's promise and declared purpose. David honoured God's faithfulness, expressed his heart's desire, and becomes a model to us in this prayer. **I. It is grounded on God's promise.** "Thou hast spoken." Without this darkness and uncertainty—no hope, no encouragement to pray. The labourer in the field, the soldier in the army, and the maidservant in the family animated by promise. The Bible filled with promises well adapted to our moral condition, and reveals "exceeding great and precious promises." **II. It regards God's honour solely.** "That thy name may be magnified" (ver. 24). This shall be the sum and aim of all our prayers. Magnify self less and God more. Both as "Lord of hosts and God of Israel," that is as universal Ruler and covenant God let him be glorified. **III. It ascribes all to God's free grace.** "Thou hast told thy servant." The beginning, the revelation from thee. None could have guessed, been assured, or predicted without thy word. All of God's good pleasure, whose name is mentioned no less than eight times in these few verses (*cf.* parallel passage, 2^d Sam. vii. 24-29). **IV. It appeals to God's faithfulness.** "Thou art God," unchangeable, powerful, and fit to be trusted. "Thy words are truth" (2 Sam.), never fail, and their accomplishment may be relied upon. The Bible invites unbounded trust in God's character and procedure—represents it to be the grand duty and joyous privilege of all men. **V. It receives the fulness of God's blessing.** God blesses now, and his blessing cannot be revoked (ver. 27). Independent of future mercies, prayer is a training, discipline, and dignity—the appointed means for our spiritual and future good, and the needed preparation to attain it. Never in vain. Good to draw near now to receive that blessing, "which maketh rich, &c."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 13. *I will be his father and he shall be my son.* This true—(1) of Solomon and other descendants of David who were kings of Judah; (2) of Christ, "the son of David" (Heb. i. 5); (3) of every one who is a believer in Christ and thus a child of God (1 Jno. iii. 1; v. 1) [*Lange*].
 Vers. 17-22. *A model of devout thanksgiving.* I. Over that he rejoices. 1. Over great blessings received in the past. 2. Over yet greater blessings promised in the future (ver. 17). II. In what spirit he regards these favours. 1. As utterly undeserved by himself

(ver. 16). 2. As the gift of God's sovereign grace [*Ibid.*].

Vers. 20-22. *God's relation to his people.* Let us for the illustrating of these words consider—I. The relation which God bears to his people. 1. He has chosen them out of the world, which lieth in wickedness. 2. He has given himself to them in a peculiar way. 3. He avows that relation to them before the whole universe. II. Inquire what, under that relation, we may expect at his hands. 1. The care of his providence. 2. The communications of his grace. 3. The manifestations of his

love. 4. The possession of his glory. III. What, under that relation, he is entitled to expect from us. 1. That we "be a people to him." 2. That we give ourselves to him, as he has given himself to us. Conclude with two proposals—(1) That we at this very hour accept Jehovah as our God; (2) That we now consecrate ourselves to him as his people [*C. Simeon, M.A.*].

Vers. 23-27. *The relation between God's promise and prayer.* I. The promise prompts to prayer. The character of him who makes the promise, the value of the blessing promised stir up and never prevent prayer. II. The promise assures success in prayer. It is not a mere venture, presumption, or uncertainty, but confident hope of God's blessing. *Characteristics of true prayer.* "The prayer of David after the reception of the Lord's promise of favour bears testimony to the unexpected, joyfully surprising revelation that was made to him and mirrors his childlike *humility, fervid devotion,*

and *unshakable confidence* towards his God." To this prayer, which proceeds from a joyfully shocked and deeply moved heart, applies (so far as is possible from the Old Testament standpoint) what Bernard of Clairvaux says of true prayer: "If the way to God's throne is to stand free and open to our prayer, and it is there to find ready acceptance and hearing, it must proceed from an *humble, fervid, and trusting* heart. *Humility* teaches us the necessity of prayer, *fervour* gives it flight and endurance, *trust* provides it with an unmovable foundation" [*Lange*]. "This thanksgiving confirms anew the fact that the only foundation on which the true godliness and everlastingness of the kingdom can rest is the purity and holiness of an humble heart, and therefore the hearty and living humility of David's thanksgiving may give us the strongest assurance that here is really enthroned the culmination of all royal rule" [*Baumgarten*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 7. *From the sheepcote.* Be not ashamed of your origin. It is well for the great who have risen to be reminded of the humble place which they once occupied. At one of Napoleon's grand imperial receptions, where his brothers and sisters were, all of them elevated to high rank, and some of them with royal titles, it is reported that one of them said to another, "What would our father and mother have said if they had seen us as we are now?" [*S. S. Teacher*].

Ver. 11. *Days expired.* God respects not so much after what manner we die, as what manner of death we die [*Augustine*]. Is that a *death-bed* where a Christian dies? Yes; *but not his*—" 'tis Death itself that dies" [*Coleridge*].

Vers. 16-19. *What speak more.* Debt to grace. When a friend observed to Rev. John Brown, of Had-dington, that we must run deeper and deeper into grace's debt, he replied,

"Oh, yes; and God is a good creditor; he never seeks back the principal sum, and indeed puts up with a poor annual rent" [*Life of, &c.*].

Vers. 20-26. *A great God to trust in.* Wesley, preaching at Doncaster, said, a poor Romanist woman, having broken her crucifix, went to her priest frequently crying out, "Now I have broken my crucifix, I have nothing to trust in but the great God." Wesley exclaimed, "What a mercy she had a great God to trust in!" A Romanist present was powerfully affected—"the great God to trust in" touched his heart. He was very deeply convinced of his need of salvation, and joined the Methodist Society, and became an ornament to religion [*Bib. Museum*].

Ver. 26. *Promised.*

"The thing surpasses all my thought,
But faithful is my Lord;
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word."

[*John Gill*].

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter, parallel with 2 Sam. viii., gives an account of David's wars (vers. 1-13); and a list of his chief officers.

Vers. 1, 2.—Gath, "the arm bridle," so called (2 Sam. viii. 1) for its supremacy, as capital of Philistia, over other towns, or because in its capture and dependencies, David gained complete control of his restless neighbours. *Moab*. Severities by which they were treated, and probable reason for such retribution, given in Sam. *Gifts*, i.e., became tributary to Israel.

Vers. 3-8.—Zobah conquered. Had., "derived from Hadad, a Syrian deity. It seems to have become the official and hereditary title of the rulers of that kingdom" [*Jam.*]. *Ver. 4. Chariots*. Great discrepancy between this and 2 Sam. viii. 3-14. *Houghed*, i.e., cut the sinews, lamed the horses, and made chariots useless. *Ver. 6. Garrisons*, not in text, rightly restored from Sam. [*Speak. Com.*]. *Ver. 7. Shields*, indicative of wealth. *Ver. 8. These places* specially given on account of brass or copper indicated there.

Vers. 9-11.—Congratulations from Tou (Toi in Sam.). *Ver. 10. Had.*, Joram. *Enquire*, "to greet him and congratulate him." *Had war*, lit. was a man of wars (cf. Is. xli. 12). *Ver. 11. Edom*, from Aram; more fully in 2 Sam. viii.

Vers. 12, 13.—Edomites, having provoked David, he sent an army, subdued and made their country a tributary province. Valley of Salt south of Salt Sea. This annexation of Edom enlarged Israel on south-east to Red Sea, fulfilled divine prediction (Ex. xxiii. 31), and gave command of its ports.

Vers. 14-17.—Officers of the King. Joab, supreme command, minister of war. *Jehos.*, not keeper of records merely; but referee on internal affairs, the *chancellor*, who drew up and issued royal decrees. *Zadok*, became high-priest after David's accession, through his father Ahitub, a descendant of Aaron's son *Eleazar*. *Abim.*, Ahimelech, through Abiathar from *Ithamar*, younger son of Aaron (1 Chr. xxiv. 3-6). *Sharesha*, a variant from "Shisha" (1 Ki. iv. 3); the "Sheva" of 2 Sam. xxii. 25, and the "Seraiah" of 2 Sam. viii. 17, are probably corrupt readings [*Speak. Com.*]. *Scribe*, State Secretary. *Ver. 17. Ben.*, a mighty warrior of Kabzeel (2 Sam. xxiii. 20-23). *Cher.* and the *Pel.*, the royal body-guard attached to the king's court and person. *Chief*, heads or princes, officers in the palace.

HOILETICS.

DAVID'S WARS.—Verses 1-8.

A short time elapsed between events of last chapter and events of this, but David ready for active service. Wonderful promises stirred up to brave deeds. **I. The Philistines are subdued** (ver. 1). Ancient inveterate enemies, finally smitten, bereft of their capital and their towns. "David smote the Philistines and subdued (humbled) them" (2 Sam. viii. 1). All must fall before the authority of Christ. **II. The Moabites are smitten**. Why Moab was at enmity with David not known, formerly on friendly terms (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4). The severe punishment inflicted upon them implies some grave offence. They became servants and paid tribute for a long time. Balaam's prediction now fulfilled (Numb. xxiv. 17). **III. Hadarezer, king of Zobah, defeated**. A powerful king, reigned over a country central and convenient for help. 1. *Defeated when trying to enlarge his kingdom*. "He went to establish his dominion" shaken by Saul and to confirm after regaining it. One thing lost by grasping at another. Worldly possessions uncertain. Wealth, power, and empire often taken when possessors seek to establish them. 2. *Defeated when allied with Syrians*. Allies in vain when God is opposed. Hand may join hand, enemies of God's people may contribute their men and their stores, but they often combine to ruin themselves. Their wealth aid up for the just, and the spoils of nations help to adorn the house and kingdom of God. **IV. The Edomites are conquered** (ver. 13). David's splendour increased by another victory. Edomites fancied that David's wars in north would give them quiet possession of the southern part of Israelitish territory. But returning

from the conquest of Aramœans and Ammonites he engaged Edomites in Valley of Salt, slew eighteen thousand, and garrisoned the country. Thus, from north to south, Israel's enemies were overcome. David's wars were wars of God. He overcame, as we must overcome, by God's presence and help. "He causeth us to triumph."

CONGRATULATIONS OF THE KING OF HAMATH.—*Verses 9-11.*

Toi heard of the decisive victory over Hadarezer, sent an embassy to greet David and congratulate him on success. Look at this—I. **As an Eastern custom.** "Who in the East has not witnessed similar things? Has a man gained a case in a court of law; has he been blessed by the birth of a son; has he given his daughter in marriage; has he gained a situation under government; has he returned from a voyage or a journey, or finished a successful speculation; then his friends and neighbours send messengers to congratulate him—to express the joy they feel in his prosperity; so much so that had it come to themselves their pleasure could not have been greater" [*Roberts*]. II. **As a stroke of policy.** Had carried on constant war with Toi. Hence joy at deliverance from an enemy and anxiety to be friendly with the conqueror. It is our interest to be on terms with God and his people. "Kiss the son (be subject to him and reverence him), lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Ps. ii. 12). III. **As an expression of friendship.** Toi sent his son to seek friendly alliance. The rich presents an expression of respect and submission. Friendship with God procured by dedication of heart and life to him.

CONSECRATED SPOILS.—*Verse 11.*

Need not approve of all David's actions in war, but may commend his spirit and example in the disposal of his booty. I. **As an evidence of loyalty to God.** Many princes adorned their palaces, beautified the arms of their soldiers, or preserved the spoils of the enemy for their own aggrandisement. David set them apart from profane to sacred use, put them into the treasury of the sanctuary. An instance of gratitude to God, by whose aid he had gained them, seldom imitated by victorious kings. Men not always faithful in prosperity. If we are successful in studies, business, and pursuits, let us devote our spoils, our knowledge, wealth, and influence to him from whom comes every gift. II. **As a help to the furtherance of God's cause.** David gained subjects, territories, and political alliance; received gifts of horses and chariots, gold and brass, but all consecrated to lawful use. Presents of friends and spoils of enemies devoted to the Lord, and helped to rear and adorn the temple. Many refuse gifts from worldly men for religious purposes, disparage liberality on the ground that God cares not for material wealth. But God connects the wealth with the work of men. Christ regards whatever is done to his people as done to himself, and heathens will turn and bring presents to him (Is. lx. 6).

DAVID'S ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICERS.—*Verses 13-17.*

Besides military exploits and activity, a description of internal government with its officials and their duties. I. **David's government was righteous government.** One or two qualities chronicled. "He executed judgment and justice among all the people." Right and purity not always

connected with authority. Society is maintained and its advantages consolidated by justice. Just rulers make contented and united people. Justice in the court, on the bench, and in the ranks exalts a nation, and gives it a sacred mission to the world. **II. David's officers were eminent men.** The most eminent of the age composed his cabinet. The commander-in-chief, clever, courageous, and renowned for military achievements. Faithful to the king, not always to principle. The chancellor correctly published royal decrees and registered events in the State archives. The body-guard round the king and priests before the altar, each in his place and work, gave influence to the reign, and felt honoured in the service. Thus David's rule not only associated with military prowess, but poetic genius and personal piety. Remarkable for men of rank and administrative ability, and did more for Israel than Charlemagne did for Europe or Alfred for England.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-3. 1. How *trying the life of David!* Its wars, toils, hardships, and perils great and numerous. 2. Yet how *happy the life of David!* God preserved him, gave honour and success. He rendered true service; never separated any part from God to keep for self. This severs from divine care. If we take our lives wilfully into our hands, and devote them to our own selfish pursuits, God withdraws special grace, we fall into the enemy's hands, and fail to accomplish the work we might have done.

Ver. 13. *The Lord preserved David.* 1. From spiritual pride. In exaltation, power and success in battle. 2. From personal injury in war. Often in danger, but an unseen hand sustained him. 3. From disgraceful defeat. Many commanders lost their

lives, and kings their crowns. 4. From unjust government. He began with no fatal blunder, levied no unjust taxes, introduced no unwise policy, nor created any disloyalty. He reigned in the affections of the people, gave the glory to God, and was preserved in honour and prosperity.

Vers. 9-13. *Lessons from David's years of warfare.* 1. A pious man may have many enemies. 2. A pious man may be required to spend much of his life in war. 3. A pious man may be compelled to inflict severe punishments. 4. A pious man, even though not always prospered or preserved, is always guided and blessed. 5. A pious man will rejoice to consecrate the richest results of his struggles and toils to God [*Lange*, 2 Sam. viii.].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 4. *Houghed.* The reason of this mutilation was that, horses being forbidden by the Mosaic constitution to the Hebrews, both in war and in agriculture, it was of no use to keep them; and their neighbours placing much dependence on cavalry, but having, for want of a native breed, to procure them by purchase, the greatest damage that could be done to such enemies was to render their horses un-serviceable in war (*cf.* Gen. xlix. 6; Josh. xi. 6-9) [*Jamieson*].

Ver. 11. *Dedicate.* Eastern princes have always been accustomed to hoard up vast quantities of gold [see *Layard*, "Nineveh and its Remains," II., p. 344]. This is the first instance of a practice uniformly followed by David, of reserving, after defraying expenses and bestowing suitable rewards upon his soldiers, the remainder of the spoil taken in war, to accumulate for the grand project of his life—the erection of a national temple at Jerusalem [*Ibid.*].

CHAPTER XIX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] *After this* other wars with Ammon and Aram. The chapter corresponds with 2 Sam. x.

Vers. 1-5.—*Insult to David's messengers.* Nahash (1 Sam. xi. 1; 2 Sam. x. 1). *Kindness*, N. friendly with David, and an enemy to Saul. *Comfort*, condole him. *Search* thy capital. *Shaved* half the face. The beard greatly valued in East, to violate it the greatest insult. *Tarry* in seclusion till the mark of disgrace had disappeared.

Vers. 6, 7.—*Ammon and Syria war with David.* *Odious*, Israel universally roused to avenge the insult. *Talents*, equal to £342,100; to procure the help of foreign mercenaries. *Chariots*, also riders, or cavalry, accustomed to fight on horseback or in chariots, and occasionally on foot. Accepting this as the true rendering, the number of hired auxiliaries mentioned in this passage agrees exactly with the statement in 2 Sam. x. 6 (cf. Davidson's *Hermeneutics*, p. 552).

Vers. 8-15.—*Joab defeats Ammon.* *Host*, the whole forces of Israel engaged in this war. Beset by Ammonites in front and by Syrians behind, Joab resolves to attack the latter—the more numerous and formidable host—while he directed Abishai, with a suitable force, to attack the Ammonites (vers. 12, 13). This brief address appeals to the courage, patriotism, and religion of his men. Ver. 15. Mercenaries defeated, the courage of the Ammonites failed, they took flight and entrenched themselves within fortified walls.

Vers. 16-19.—*Second victory over Aram.* *River*, Euphrates. *Shophach* (2 Sam. x. 15-19). *Seven thousand* (cf. 2 Sam. x. 18). "Either the text in one of the books is corrupt (*Keil*, *Davidson*), or the accounts must be combined (*Kennicott*, *Houbigant*, *Calmet*)" [*Jamieson*]. Ver. 19. *Servants*, tributaries.

HOMILETICS.

THE MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE.—Verses 1-5.

Nahash, a neighbourly king, friendly with David in the days of Saul, and perhaps congratulated him on accession to the throne. Hanun, son of Nahash, succeeded after his father's death. To him David sent an embassy of condolence. **I. The generous message of David.** Gratitude not absorbed by death. Expressions of sympathy needful. Nothing worthier than to requite kindness with thanks. 1. *In its occasion.* A time of bereavement and sorrow when such a message is seasonable. 2. *In its form.* The customary method of sending courtiers to condole with friends in loss or suffering. But Hanun's loss was David's loss. A true friend valued by relatives and neighbours, honoured in death and memory. **II. The disgraceful treatment of David's messengers.** If suspected, they might have been dismissed civilly, or kept in honourable custody till the truth was known. They were treated with the greatest indignity. Shaving their beards and shortening their garments a double insult in the East, where long beards and long garments are badges of honour. Many Orientals would rather die than lose their beards (signs of the dignity and ornament of freedom), and Turks used to regard beardless Europeans as runaway slaves. **III. The considerate kindness for the disgraced messengers.** "Tarry at Jericho, &c." The first place they reached in Canaan, a private village, where they might remain until fit to appear in public. Men of that character must not be seen dishonoured and unfit for duty. Character gives influence, commands admiration, and is the real power of men. "Men of character are the conscience of society to which they belong" [*Emerson*]. If character be lost, then nothing left worth saving. Ever be concerned for good character. Preserve and keep that from dishonour and impurity.

AVENGING AN INSULT.—*Verses 6-19.*

Israel roused by the insult. The Ammonites knew that they had made themselves "odious" to David, and both sides prepared to engage in foolish war. **I. Insult springing from slight provocation.** Hanun seems bereft of wisdom, acted most foolishly, and brought ruin to himself and his nation. "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child." 1. *From a suspicious mind.* Embassy treated as spies. Wicked men measure others by themselves, and put an evil construction upon the best intention. Bp. Patrick well says, "There is nothing so well meant but it may be ill interpreted, and is wont to be so by men who love nobody but themselves." 2. *From advice of jealous princes.* "Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father?" Nothing of the kind. They are come to inspect the capital, spy the land, and prepare for its conquest. These princes were jealous of the mighty growth of David's kingdom, counselled the adoption of a hostile policy, and conveyed slight reproach in their question. The king was influenced, and the insult committed. **II. Insult leading to unjust war.** This war, like many others, commenced by a wrongdoer, and might have been avoided by an honourable apology or better understanding. One evil leads to another. When men begin a quarrel, they know not where it will end. "It is one of the mad principles of wickedness," says Bp. Hall, "that it is wickedness to relent, and rather to die than yield. Even ill causes, once undertaken, must be upheld, although with blood; whereas the gracious heart, finding his own mistaking, doth not only remit of an ungrounded displeasure, but studies to be revenged of itself, and to give satisfaction to the offended." **III. War terminating in disgraceful overthrow.** Syrians from three places hired and headed by powerful men, fought with chariots, cavalry, and infantry. A vigorous attack was made, and they fled, "as often happens," says Bp. Patrick, "with those that fight for pay alone, without respect to the cause." 1. *Defeat most humiliating.* Syrians first fled, and the Ammonites soon followed, without fighting at all. They retreated to the city, but stone walls are no defence without stout hearts. 2. *Defeat most complete.* The commander was killed, thousands were slain. Vassal princes submitted to David, and the Syrian nation forsook their allies, and became tributary to Israel. Persistence in evil-doing is sure to ruin. Strife spreads. One angry word leads to another. One look of revenge, one act of resentment, will kindle a fire that may set a neighbourhood or a nation into flame. "Therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with."

"Contention, like a horse
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
And bears all before him" [*Shakespeare*].

THE WAR CRY.—*Verses 10-13.*

The enemy appeared on the field, divided their forces, the Syrians in front and the Ammonites behind Joab. But, like an expert commander, he picked out the best soldiers to engage the Syrians, the strongest and most valiant. He gave a spirited address to his army, set a brave example, and left the issue with God.

I. The purpose for which they fought. Not for aggressive or ambitious purposes. For the cause of humanity, "for our people;" for religious freedom and the cause of God, "and for the cities of our God." **II. The**

method in which they fought. Success always depends upon certain conditions. Joab owed his victory partly to sagacious command. 1. *A wise economy of forces.* Bravest in front, and less trained for less important work. A strong reserve force, not all concentrated on a given place. Naseby lost to Charles by Rupert pursuing fugitives too far. The king on the point of overpowering Fairfax. Cromwell hastened to his chief and decided the battle. Charles cried in vain to rally his men, "One more charge and we recover the day." In the battle of life we should direct our physical and mental powers wisely—ever seek to have strength reserved for "the evil day." 2. *A determination to render mutual help.* "If Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me, &c." Unity and hearty co-operation essential. The strong should ever be ready to help the weak. Solitude is selfishness and death in moral warfare. "Two are better than one. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falleth." **III. The spirit in which they fought.** Joab's advice admirable, though not always practised by himself. He shared David's powers, but not David's piety. 1. *A spirit of exalted courage.* "Let us behave ourselves valiantly" (ver. 13). Brave words from a brave heart. "A good leader must, out of his own abundance, put life and spirits into all others; if a lion lead sheep into the field, there is hope of victory" [*Bishop Hall*]. "Play the man," Latimer's motto; let it be ours in all conflicts and departments of life. Idlers, dreamers, and irresolute never win anything. "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people" (2 Sam. x. 12). 2. *A spirit of true patriotism.* Personal glory and family reputation powerful motives. But when a country must be defended and a people delivered, then a true spirit required. "Remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." 3. *A spirit of submission to God.* "Let the Lord do that which is good in his sight" (ver. 13). An element of uncertainty in all events. Here an expression of confidence, not despair, nor fatalism. The heraldic motto on a broken helmet in Battle Abbey most suitable, "L'espoir est ma force." Diligently prepare, bravely enter the battle, and humbly submit to God. "The fortune of war" not in our hands, but God's. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *David said.* Let Hanun be as graceless as he will, David will show himself gracious by being grateful. The same Greek word (*charis*) signifieth both grace and gratitude. Neither doth the ill success he had argue that he did amiss, as Pellican will have it, for duty is to be done, however it speed or take with wicked persons. What if Hanun were a heathen king? Might not his friendship be therefore sought? might not his father's courtesy be requited? If a very dog fawn upon us we stroke him on the head, and clap him on the side; much less is the common band of humanity untied by grace [*Trapp*].

Vers. 4-7. *One false step leadeth*

to another. "One injustice produces another, and drags men on irretardably to destruction by the resulting chain of sins and injustices. The King of Ammon, with sinful levity, lends his ear to the liars and calumniators that surround him; thence comes the most outrageous insolence towards David's ambassadors, and the most abusive insult to the whole people of Israel; on this follows the hasty preparation and provocation of a wholly unjust, wicked war; therein the princes are forced to take part, and so to stake their land and people. The end is complete destruction" [*Lange*].

Vers. 8-15. Joab's word to Abishai is a prelude to the Lord's word to

Peter: "Strengthen thy brethren." Heroic bravery in the war is to be combined—1. With the *recognition* of those most sacred *possessions and ends* for which the struggle is to be made; thereby it is consecrated; and 2. With humble, trustful *submission* to the *will of the Lord*; thereby it is preserved from tenuity and presumptuousness. The war is a just and holy one, undertaken for the defence of the possessions received from God, to guard the honour of God, and in the name of God [*Ibid.*]. Ver. 13.

Bravery in battling for the highest object. 1. It is rooted in *fidelity* to God and to our brethren the *people* of God. 2. It is *proven* by *devotion* of body and soul and the whole life to the aims of the *kingdom* of God. 3. It is *sanctified* by unconditional *submission* to the purposes and doings of the *will* of God [*Ibid.*]. "Let us behave ourselves, &c." United help by advice, sympathy, and hearty co-operation in contending for truth and Christ in the world. "United we stand, divided we fall."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 2. *Kindness.* How unsuitable is it for us, who live only by kindness (Tit. iii. 4-7), to be unkind! [*Edwards*].

Ver. 3. *Thinkest thou.* To think well is the way to act rightly [*Sauley*]. It is an easy thing to pick a quarrel where we intend a mischief [*Bishop Hall*]. Upright simplicity is the deepest wisdom, and perverse craft the merest shallowness [*Barrow*].

Ver. 12. *Unity and unanimous movement.* The strength of the Church is, not as an army of irregular soldiers, regiments in loose disorder, unconnected with each other, but when she *goeth forth by bands* (Prov. xxx. 27) united, concentrated, well disciplined, every officer at his post, every soldier

in his ranks, each under rule, helpful to each other, and to their great cause! When shall it once be? Lord, heal our unhappy divisions. Unite our energies "in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity" [*Bridges*].

Vers. 16-18. *Syrians defeated a second time.* So incurable is the folly and wickedness of some men that, though to reproofs and chidings you should add stripes and blows, they would not grow wiser and better. "An obstinate man does not hold opinions, they hold him" [*Pope*]. "Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong" [*Dryden*].

"You may as well
Forbid the sea for to obey the moon,
As, by oath remove, or counsel shake
The fabric of his folly" [*Shakespeare*].

CHAPTER XX.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] This extract from the ancient records tells of Rabbah taken (vers. 1-3); and three sons of the giant of Gath slain (vers. 4-8). It covers 2 Sam. xi.-xxi. [*Murphy*].

Vers. 1-3.—*Rabbah taken.* Year, at the return or beginning of the year, setting in of spring. Time, when kings of Israel were accustomed, after winter season, to go out to war. Rabbah besieged to complete chastisement of Ammon for insult to David's messengers. Tarried, his presence not required in the war, more needful in seat of government (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 26-31). Crown. When citadel was taken, the king captured or killed; David took the crown from his head and set it upon his own, to represent himself lord of the Ammonite territory. Cut (ver. 3, cf. margin, made them sawers of stone, diggers of iron, and cutters of wood, i.e., condemned them to forced labour; cf. 2 Sam. xii. 30, 31).

Vers. 4-8.—*Giants slain.* Gezer, Gob (2 Sam. xxi. 19). Sibb. (chap. xi. 29). Sippai, Saph. They, the Philistines. Elh. (2 Sam. xxi. 19; 1 Chr. xi. 26). Gath (ver. 6; Josh. xi. 22). Man (2 Sam. xx. 6, 7). Fell (ver. 8, cf. 2 Sam. xx. 22, where an account of a conflict between David and a son of Rapha is given).

HOMILETICS.

THE CAPTURE OF RABBAH.—Verses 1-3.

Punishment of Ammon for treatment of embassy of condolence, hindered by inclement season, now to be completed. The chief city taken, and its fall the crowning act of David's conquests. From the manner of its capture and the punishment of its people we learn—**I. That in spiritual warfare there must be no cessation.** Rest gives advantage to the enemy, and may delay or frustrate the end in view. "Forwards, children, forwards!" urged Blucher, in meeting Wellington at Waterloo. 1. *Make needful preparation.* Count cost, and fail not through lack of forethought and preparation. Enterprises break down, plans wrecked in every department of labour, through neglect of this principle. "What king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" 2. *Be ready for every advantage.* "The time to go out" must be discovered and seized. Many such seasons given to a watchful Christian. "Take the instant by the forward step." "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." **II. That in conducting spiritual warfare opportunity is given for the display of virtuous qualities.** Joab had besieged the capital, taken lower part of town, or "city of waters," and knowing that it would soon fall, sent for the king to come in person and have the honour of taking it himself (*cf.* 2 Sam. xii. 26). Taking this act as that of an adroit courtier, unwilling to run the risk of exciting the king's envy by his success, it was wise. But the act of a devoted servant, denying himself, honouring his master, and shielding him from popular disfavour (through his conduct with Bathsheba). Room for us to help the weak, admire the successful, and, above all, to transfer the glory of our conquests to our gracious "Commander and Leader." **III. That all things in spiritual warfare will be subdued under God's power.** The city was taken, and the people subdued. In Christian warfare, every evil thought in heart, every besetting sin, and every vicious principle in life, overcome by grace; every stronghold of Satan, and every enemy to Christ eventually subdued. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Great the punishment of those who resist. Ammonites suffered severely, but "woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him."

THE HEROES AND THE GIANTS.—Verses 4-8.

Individual exploits here given marvellous. Sibbechai, Elhan, and Jonathan slew their men, sons of Rapha, descendants of the race of Raphaim at Gath, remains of pre-Canaanitish inhabitants, distinguished by their gigantic size (*cf.* 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22). Learn—**I. The enemies of God's people are most powerful.** Giants in appearance and reality. 1. *Splendid in equipment.* Armed with shields and spears, mighty in stature, and conspicuous among their fellows. Our enemies often powerful in material advantages, learning, and all appliances of modern science. 2. *Defiant in attitude.* "He defied Israel" (*ver.* 7). Thinking much of themselves, highly esteemed, perhaps, by contemporaries; men of "a high look and a proud heart." "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled," &c. **II. God's people are ever victorious in God's strength.** Inferior in number and unequal in outward equipment, yet a match for giants of ignorance, vice, and sin. Shepherd boys have overthrown kingdoms, and striplings slain giants of evil. Men of faith, with "lamps and pitchers," with "the jawbone of an ass," with the meanest instru-

ments, have overcome men of might and stature. "Never let the church's friends be disheartened by the power and pride of the church's enemies. We need not fear great men against us while we have the great God for us. What will a finger more on each hand do, or a toe more on each foot, in contest with Omnipotence?"

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *David tarried at Jerusalem.* Out of the way of temptation if he had gone with the army in active duty. Temporary rest from work and fight leads often to (a) moral indolence or spiritual sloth; (b) carelessness in office, or unfaithfulness in calling; (c) temptation and disgrace. "Idle hours bring forth idle thoughts, and idle thoughts are nothing but dry, kindling wood, that waits only for a spark to be suddenly a blaze. All have had painful experience that our sins often have their roots in indolence and unfaithfulness in our calling. As long as we walk and work in our office, we are encompassed with a wall; as soon as we fall out of our office, we fall away from our fortunes, and become a prey to the enemy" [*Disselhoff*].

Ver. 2. *Crown from off his head.* 1. Earthly crowns and kingdoms may be lost and transferred to others. By war, wickedness, and death. When Richard II. was deposed, he was

brought forth, says the historian, in a royal robe, and a crown upon his head. Never was a prince so gorgeous with less glory and more grief. 2. Heavenly crowns may be gained. David set store on this crown from the King of Ammon. Better far the crown of God's favour, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory. These untarnished by blood and severities, real ornaments to character, and unfading with time, &c.

Vers. 4-8. *The conflict of the world-power against God's kingdom* is (1) a continual conflict ever again renewed (*There was war again*, ver. 5); (2) a conflict carried on with malicious cunning, frightful power, and mighty weapons (ver. 5); (3) a conflict perilous to the people of God, demanding all the power given them by the Lord, and their utmost bravery; (4) a conflict that by God's help at last ends in the victory of his kingdom [*Lange*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 2. *An incorruptible crown.* A French officer, a prisoner on parole at Reading, met with a Bible; he read it, was so impressed with its contents that he was convinced of the folly of sceptical principles and of the truth of Christianity, and resolved to become a Protestant. When rallied by gay associates for taking so serious a turn, he said in vindication, "I have done no more than my old schoolfellow Bernadotte, who has become a Lutheran." "Yes, but he became so," said his associates, "to obtain a crown." "My motive," said the Christian officer, "is the same; we only differ as to the place. The object of Bernadotte is to obtain a crown in Sweden; mine is to obtain a crown in heaven" [*Bib. Museum*].

Ver. 3. *A lesson to conquerors.* When Edward the Confessor had entered England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied, "God forbid that the kingdom should be recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No; I will rather lead a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow-men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without bloodshed [*Percy Anecdotes*].

CHAPTER XXI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The events here given appear in 2 Sam. xxiv., where the manner in which the census was taken is fully described, which took Joab nine months and twenty days. This narrative is condensed.

Vers. 1-6.—Numbering of people. Satan, the Lord in Sam. "Both had their hand in the work—God by permission, Satan by suggestion" [*Bp. Hall*]. *Provoked*, stirred up. *Trepass* (ver. 3), the results of trespass—i.e., punishment. Ver. 4. A summary of five verses of 2 Sam. xxiv. 4-8, which give route taken by Joab and assistants, and time occupied to their return. Ver. 5. *Number* of all lists added together. Discrepancy not easy to explain. "It seems far better to explain, with most commentators, that the numbers have, in one passage or the other (or possibly in both), suffered corruption" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 6. *Levi*, following precedent in Num. i. 47-49; *Benj.*, because Joab desired to frustrate king's intention, or because taken on former occasion (ch. vii. 6-11), and register preserved in archives of the tribe.

Vers. 7, 8.—God's displeasure. These words an anticipation of verses 14 and 15; are placed here, interrupting the narrative, to show that Joab's artifice was not successful—it did not avert God's wrath. David was punished for his intention, though that intention was not completely carried out by his subordinate [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 9-13.—God's message. *Seer*, prophet elsewhere; perhaps a pupil of David (2 Sam. xxii. 8), and successor of Samuel in office. *Offer*, stretch out to thee. *Choose*, take to thee. *Three things*, famine, sword, or pestilence, which often recur in Scripture (Deut. xxviii. 21-25; Rev. vi. 4-8). "This beautiful agreement in the numbers is completely destroyed by the reading *seven*" [*Keil*]. *Strait*, one form of the evil must be taken, cannot be avoided. Experience taught him which to choose.

Vers. 14-17.—God sends pestilence. Its form not given; results most sweeping. At length reached the capital. *Angel* to destroy it. Ornan and his sons hid themselves on the apparition of the angel, but came out to welcome David. The king saw the vision, appeared with the elders in the garb and assumed the attitude of penitence, confessed their sins, and deprecated the wrath of God.

Vers. 18-22.—David builds an altar. Command to build and choice of site directly from God, through an angel, to Gad. *Altar* marked the site for the future temple. *Threshing-floor*, the level summit of elevated ground on eastern ridge on which Jerusalem was situated.

Vers. 23-26.—David buys the threshing-floor. In Eastern style of politeness, Ornan offers the whole to David, as Ephron to Abraham (Gen. xxiii.). Ver. 25. *Gave* value of the place here; that of threshing-floor and oxen in Sam. "The one writer states the matter of present interest, the other records the matter of permanent moment" [*Murphy*].

Vers. 27-30.—David sacrifices on the altar. *Sacrificed*. The whole code of regulations for offerings given in Lev. i.-vii. *By fire*, answer given on critical occasions (Lev. ix. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 24-38). Sacrifice accompanied with cessation of plague. *There* (ver. 28), regarding that spot as sacred. The altar of burnt-offering still at Gibeon, where he could not go in present emergency, for fear of the angel. After this divine institution Mount Moriah (2 Chron. iii. 1) became a place of lawful sacrifice [cf. *Murphy*]. David knowing that by sacrifice on this altar he had caused the angel to stay his hand, was afraid to transfer his offerings elsewhere, lest the angel should resume his task, and pestilence again break out [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE WICKED CENSUS.—Verses 1-6.

What wrong in numbering the people? A shepherd likes to know the number of his sheep. A census had been commanded and taken in the wilderness (Num. i. 1, 2). It was customary with other kings, that they might know what an army to muster for war. Judging from Scripture accounts, we learn the following truths—**I. It was an act instigated by mysterious influence.** Supernatural influence. Satan the adver-

sary was permitted in some way to move David. God is said in Scripture to do what he suffers or permits. Man's free will not forced nor destroyed by the Divine will. "The web of human actions is very complex. The great Mover rules over all, but many undermovers intervene in the drama of life; so that it is not more difficult to foretell the course of the weather than of the will." Yet sin is man's own act, and the punishment of a righteous God presupposes its guilt. **II. It was an act of sinful pride.** Enemies subdued, his rule undisputed, yet not content. Wanted to ascertain and boast in the military strength of the people, "that I may know the number of the people" (2 Sam. xxiv. 2; cf. 1 Chr. xxvii. 23). "This clear also from the fact that Joab delayed as long as possible carrying it into Benjamin, in order not to arouse the insurrectionary spirit of this tribe, which could not forget the leadership it had possessed under Saul" [*Hengs.*]. Kings proud, prosperous, and ambitious, often vain, confident in their own greatness, boastful of the number of their soldiers and the resources of their subjects. David remarkably successful, and thought himself invincible. **III. It was an act of treason against God.** Israel were God's people, not David's to count and number as *he* thought fit. Disobedient to take a census without God's command; perversion of God's favours to turn them into schemes of self-aggrandizement, and the purposes of God, according to the laws of justice and moral order, cannot be obscured or hindered without impunity by proud acts and ambitious plans of kings. David's sin akin to that of Nebuchadnezzar, whom Jehovah taught by bitter experience "to know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." **IV. It was an act of peril to the nation.** Joab saw this and remonstrated, "Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" It might endanger the liberty of the people, become a State device for heavy taxation, and would be sure to bring divine displeasure. "The apprehension of a Nemesis on an overweening display of prosperity," says Dean Stanley, "if not inconsistent with the highest revelations of the Divine nature in the gospel, pervades all ancient, especially all Oriental religions." Presentiments often forebode evil. "Be sure your sin will find you out." **V. It was an act of obstinate persistence.** Joab's rebuke had no effect upon David. Foolish pride puffed up, and he neither took the counsel of God nor the advice of friends. With stubborn selfwill he would have his own way—"the king's word prevailed against Joab." Advice may demand hard and unpleasant things, involve humiliation and confession of mistake, and be very different from the words we expected. Hence disregard to warnings, persistence in evil, and ultimately inevitable sufferings. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

THE PROGRESS OF TRUE PENITENCE.—*Verses 7-13.*

In these words a beautiful picture of David's repentance—successive steps of restoration to God, and the conduct of a real penitent under the chastening hand of God. I. *In signs of God's displeasure.* "God was displeased" (ver. 7). Displeasure revealed to vindicate God, aid us in apprehending our responsibility to him, and to secure right mind for due restoration. II. *In the power of an awakened conscience.* "David's heart smote him" (Sam.). "The bitter thoughts of conscience born." Suggestions from God; proofs that we are not left alone, nor hardened beyond hope. III. *In the penitent confession of sin.* Accuses himself, and is deeply grieved that others are involved in his sin (ver. 17). *I am guilty; these sheep, what have they done?* He is so penetrated with sense of guilt, and with sympathy for his innocent people, that he desires God to send judgments

“on him and his house” alone, and spare the people as his flock (these sheep). IV. *In earnest prayer for pardon.* “Take away the iniquity of thy servant” (Sam.). This only his resource. Acknowledgment of guilt, and entreaty for divine forgiveness, a proof of true state of heart. V. *In the revelation of God’s will.* The inner cry met by outer word. God announced punitive righteousness (ver. 9). This without human means or occasion. God ever ready to give light and guidance, but in his way and time. VI. *In humble submission to God’s will when known.* He bows under divine judgments, yet with hope of delivering mercy.

THE AWFUL JUDGMENTS.—Verses 11-15.

The judgment descended in the form of a tremendous pestilence—“a death,” as it is expressly termed in the original, like “the Black Death” of the Middle Ages. Appearing in the heat of the summer months, aggravated by the greatness of the population which had occasioned the census, spreading with the rapidity of an Oriental disorder in crowded habitations, it flew from end to end of the country in three days, and at last approached Jerusalem. The new capital, the very heart of the nation, the peculiar glory of David’s reign, seemed to be doomed to destruction [*Dean Stanley*].

I. Judgments entailed by one man’s sin. David responsible chiefly for its results. Man’s power to entail tremendous evils or greatest blessings upon others. Seventy thousand human beings cut off by judgment. What deaths lie at our door! **II. Judgments easily prepared for execution.** God has agents ever ready to do his will. Famine, sword, and pestilence, set in order, waiting the command to attack, and fearful in results. “The terrors of God do set themselves in (military) array against me” (Job vi. 4). **III. Judgments sent according to human preference.** “Choose thee.” Wonderful, mysterious offer! Not often done; would not always be consistent with God’s justice. We are not always able, enlightened enough to choose. This a special case, only a temporary fall from loyalty, and the design was the restoration to full trust. God wise and merciful. **IV. Judgments arrested by earnest prayer.** Room in the purposes of God and in the operations of nature for prayer. “Natural law” interferes not with prayer and human freedom. Who knows what judgments may be averted, mitigated, or turned into blessings, by earnest petition? Scripture and ecclesiastical history full of illustrations. “More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of” [*Tennyson*].

DAVID’S CHOICE.—Verses 11-13.

David offered three things. To show him and the world that the evils denounced were no casual calamities, nor effects of any natural cause, he was permitted to choose which should be immediately inflicted. Regard the choice—**I. As the result of an awakened conscience.** “I am in a great strait.” The natural feeling of one under the terrors of God; the voice of conscience in anguish and torture. “What must I do to be saved?” **II. As the revelation of the principle of Christian life.** *Famine* would leave Israel dependent upon others for food; *defeat*, on the mercy of the heathen; in *pestilence*, they would have God only to deal with. God the only refuge; no human power could defend. He left himself confidently with God. Thus gave a public testimony that it is vain to trust in man; that God only is supreme, gracious, and wise. **III. As a picture of future doom to**

all. A choice for us to make. We must fall into God's hands by voluntary submission now, or by compulsion at last. Decide to-day, before choice is taken away. "Now, therefore, advise thyself" (ver. 12).

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Know it.* But what needs that, now that there was a general peace or truce with all nations? Curiosity, it was at least; yea, it was pride and creature confidence that pricked David on to this numbering of the people, and made him so peremptory. This Augustus Cæsar might do for his pleasure, and carry it away without punishment (Luke ii. 1). Not so David. God will take that from others what he will not bear with in his own (Amos iii. 2). The Philistines might cart the ark, but David smarted for so doing [*Trapp*].

Ver. 6. *The interrupted survey.* 1. *Joab from policy* did not number all the people. The work grew tedious, and Joab did not relish it, "for the king's word was abominable to Joab." 2. *But God's providence seen in result.* Other agency beside man's recognised. Two tribes not numbered, "partly because Levi was devoted to His service, and Benjamin had become the least of all tribes (Judges xxi.); and partly because God foresaw that they would remain faithful to the house of David in the division of the tribes, and therefore would not have them diminished" [*Jamieson*].

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

Vers. 9, 10. *God an emblem of a true minister.* His message was—I. Divine. So is the gospel message, of which there is evidence drawn from—1. The facts of history. 2. Its congruity with the spiritual constitution of man. 3. Experience of those who feel its power. II. An appeal to choice: "Advise thyself." 1. You can reject it. 2. You can accept it. III. Was to be accounted for: "What word, &c." 1. God was responsible for its delivery. 2. David was responsible for its results [*Bib. Mus.*].

Ver. 8. *Foolishly.* He thought at first he had done very wisely; now he seeth his error, and disclaimeth it. We had before his contrition, confession, and supplication, all which make up his repentance for sin; here we have his conversion or reformation, which is his repentance from sin, his amendment of life [*Trapp*].

Ver. 13. *Into the hand of the Lord.* The reason for this choice was partly his confidence in God's great goodness; partly because the other judgments, especially the sword, would have been more dishonourable, not only to David, but also to God and his people; and partly because he, having sinned himself, thought it just to choose a plague, to which he was as obnoxious as his people; whereas he had better defences for himself against the sword and famine than they had. True, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Fearful indeed for those who have, by their impenitence, shut themselves from his mercy. But a penitent dares cast himself into God's hand, knowing that *his mercies are great* [*Benson*]. The compelled choice of punitive infliction, and the dread alternatives. The Divine mercy amid calamity. There is here a *Contrast between Divine and Human Chastisements*. Strange that men, who are so near us, should be less trustworthy than God, who is unseen. Men treat us worse, God better, than we have deserved. David's preference is justified when we consider—1. The harsh judgments men pronounce on each other. 2. The harsh treatment of the guilty who are in men's power. 3. The absence of sympathetic kindness in human warfare. 4. That when God punishes he does so in righteousness. 5. That in the treatment of the guilty God always shows mercy. The lessons are—1. Submission to God. 2. Hope-

ful trust. *David's choice.* 1. The option declined. Had too much of his own will already. Refers it back to God and resigns himself into *his* hands. 2. What are the reasons for this? (1) "*Great are his mercies.*" The declara-

tion of a truth, the ground of hope, and the testimony of experience. (2) *Not into the hand of man.* The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Trust in man destroys freedom, dishonours character, and disappoints hope.

HOMILETICS.

DAVID AND ISRAEL.—Verses 17–27.

The sad circumstances of David and Israel. David's wisdom in giving himself into the hands of God. God's hand is safest to hold the rod—the hand of a king, master, father. **I. The progressive course of sin.** 1. *Temptation* (ver. 1). Satan the black fountain of all transgress. David not conscious that Satan was so near. Insidiousness of Satanic influence. 2. *Transgression* (ver. 2). In face of warning (ver. 3). Its desperate folly seen by others (ver. 6). The deadening, hardening power of any lust. 3. *Punishment* (vers. 10–12). As soon will the magnet escape the influence of the pole, the sea the influence of the moon, an atom the binding force of gravitation, as the sinner escape punishment. "Be sure thy sin." **II. The progressive course of reconciliation with God.** 1. *The messenger.* God's afflictive stroke (ver. 7). The prophet Gad (ver. 9). Every person or circumstance that reproves is God's messenger. "God smote." "The Lord spake to Gad, Go, &c." 2. *Conviction* (ver. 8). The true convict always confesses, never excuses. Not only owns the sin, but acknowledges its *greatness*. Text. "It is I, &c." 3. *Penitence* (ver. 16). "Sackcloth," emblem of deepest grief; "fell upon their faces;" evidence of profound humiliation and utter prostration before God. 4. *Acceptance.* Expressly permitted to worship (ver. 18). Consciously and visibly accepted in worship (ver. 26). Delivered from the dread visitation. 5. *Grateful acknowledgment* (ver. 24). Would not offer *costless* worship. Would not offer cheap worship—"full price." We are to be living sacrifices. **III. Underlying truths.** 1. *Though man be tempted, sin is his own act.* Satan suggested, "provoked" David, yet the sin was David's. He might have had resisting strength. 2. *Our sins affect others.* How many widows and orphans! How much anguish and unutterable misery through David's sin! Any man's sins are a widespread and far-reaching curse. Text. David sinned: "these sheep" were terribly smitten. 3. *Though sin be pardoned, it leaves terrible scars behind.* In David's memory. Gaps in the families and homes of the people. Avoidance of sin infinitely better than pardon. Christ the great and only sin-healer. O Holy Ghost, draw, &c. [*R. Berry*].

THE ANGEL ARRESTED.—Verses 15–17.

The infliction of pestilence briefly noticed, without account of duration or ravages; but minute description of visible appearance and menacing attitude of the angel. Notice—**I. The errand of the angel** "to destroy it." Even angels ready executioners of God's judgments. Sodom and Jerusalem; destruction of firstborn in Egypt and of Sennacherib's army. Unseen agents often sent within sphere of things seen, to impress the heart through the senses and convince of God's ways. But Christ came not to destroy men's lives, &c. **II. The destiny of the angel.** Pestilence had swept the country, now sur-

rounded the capital. The centre of glory and empire, seat of the palace and the ark apparently doomed! God strikes at our dearest objects to chastise our sins and bring us to himself. **III. The attitude of the angel.** "A drawn sword in his hand." Indicative of wrong and determination to punish it. Giving opportunity to intercede for the city. God ready to punish, yet waits to be gracious. This attitude warns, yet encourages. **IV. The command to the angel.** "Enough." God knows exactly how far to go, how much is required to bring us to submission. "Stay now thine hand." Prayer has been offered and the design accomplished. "The Lord repented him of the evil," changed his method of procedure and stayed the plague. In this very spot Abraham countermanded from slaying his son. For the sake of the great sacrifice and Intercessor our lives are preserved from destruction.

THE ALTAR BUILT AND THE PLAGUE STAYED.—*Verses 14-26.*

Here a national calamity traceable to David's sin, and that sin apparently of minor magnitude. But what evil in it? It was the result of pride and vain-glory, to see the army he could raise, and to which he trusted instead of God. It was ingratitude for past deliverances, &c., hence the wrath of God kindled. David soon became conscious of guilt. A prophet sent to announce God's will, and choice had to be made. Observe—**I. A fearful evil.** The evil—1. *Was the plague.* Some fearful disease, swiftly mortal; for in nine hours, at most, some think 70,000 died. How awful! and beyond the power of human skill to deliver. Sudden, terrible, fatal! 2. *An angel was the messenger employed.* Now ready to fulfil his commission in Jerusalem, but God stayed him. 3. *David beheld the angel and interceded for the people.* A beautiful instance of lofty, conscientious feeling. Generous and magnanimous. **II. The divine remedy.** An altar must be built, sacrifice offered, &c. 1. *Human guilt was acknowledged.* 2. *God was glorified.* Both his justice and wrath in punishing, and his great mercy in staying his judgments. 3. *No doubt the typical end of sacrifices would be realised.* Looking on to the coming of the Lamb of God. For both sin, evil, and remedy may direct us to the great subject of atonement for a perishing world. Besides, this altar finely symbolizes the erection of houses for the worship of God. For, through the divine agency of gospel truth, by these the plague of the world is removed. Ignorance displaced by knowledge, profligacy by moral order, irreligion by godliness, unbelief and death by bestowment of salvation and eternal life. **III. A generous proposal.** Altar to be erected at a *given spot.* Nothing in religion left to fancy. David states the case clearly to Ornan. Then came the proposal. 1. This offer was beyond what David stated. "I give thee oxen, &c." 2. It was prompt, the result of generous and pious resolution. 3. It was pressed on David. 4. It was followed with prayer (2 Sam. xxiv. 23). How pious and noble! A finer specimen of godly liberality never was exhibited—the act, the manner, the spirit, the prayer! **IV. A noble and self-sacrificing spirit.** Ornan did well. David did better. Selfishness or formality would have accepted it. David desired the offering. 1. *To be his own.* The guilt had been his; so the repentance, so the fruit. 2. *He valued his religion more than his wealth.* So he paid full worth for the place. This act of David's the opposite of two classes in our day—(1) Those who wish others to pay for their religion; (2) those who wish to have religion without cost. Learn—1. The frailty of good men. David numbered the people. 2. The necessary results of sin—misery and ruin. 3. The only way of averting it. By repentance, coming to the one sacrifice on the only perpetual altar reared for the world's guilt. 4. The fruit of a sanctified heart. Holy zeal and liberality in the cause of God [*J. Burns, D.D.*].

THE PROPITIATION.—*Verses 18-27.*

Taking the altar and sacrifice as means of propitiation to reconcile, to restore man to God, we have an illustration of the atonement of Christ in its design, method, and results. **I. The moral condition which it is designed to meet.** 1. *Outward difficulties.* Offence committed and punishment due. God's anger must be taken away; his justice displayed. Man cannot remove penalty, dissolve law, nor deliver himself. In the work of Christ claims of justice satisfied, obstacles to pardon removed, demands of moral government met. Jehovah "a just God and a Saviour." 2. *Inward feelings.* Man's guilt creates fear and distance. "I was *afraid* and I *hid* myself." "He was afraid because of the sword." God's love in Christ represents him unrevenged, near and ready to forgive. The Holy Spirit renews the disposition, enlightens the mind, and takes away fear. Thus distance is destroyed, guilt overcome, and God and man reconciled. **II. The provision made for this condition.** With the distinct understanding that we simply glance at one aspect of this profound subject, we assert that to make atonement for sin required great cost. Not "by the blood of goats and calves," not "by gold and silver" are we redeemed, but by the precious blood of Christ. Christ himself was the sacrifice. Scripture and history rich in examples of benevolence and self-sacrifice; none like this. The gift of God's beloved Son more costly than worlds upon worlds; inestimable, incomprehensible. "Thanks be unto God for his *unspeakable* gift." **III. The results which it accomplished.** 1. *Danger warded off.* When David repented of sin, God repented of judgment; plague arrested; destroying angel commanded to stay his hand (ver. 15) and sheath his sword (ver. 27). 2. *Sacrifices accepted.* "God answered from heaven by fire" (ver. 26), to signify that anger was turned away and God propitious. "So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel." This typical of the sinner's reconciliation and acceptance with God through Christ. "He (himself) is the propitiation (propitiatory sacrifice) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jno ii. 2).

THE COST AND SELF-SACRIFICE OF RELIGION.—*Verses 22-26.*

Sacrifice was to be presented; specific directions were given. David promptly obeyed. A generous scene of altercation takes place. A pious and self-sacrificing decision expressed by David. Acceptable religion is a religion of self-sacrifice—a religion of cost; and the cost must be personally paid. In illustration of this, contemplate the subject. **I. In reference to the spiritual expansion of the intellectual powers.** Theology, the divine science of religion, one of boundless extent. The greatness, number, variety, and importance of the subjects. God—his works, his government, his will. The Lord Jesus Christ—the gospel, eternal life. To understand there must be reading, study, reflection. A course of divine training—religious education. We may be Christians without much knowledge, but our honour, glory, felicity, to abound in knowledge. The cost must be paid, in the attainment. The astronomer pays it, the man of literature, so the Christian. **II. Apply the subject to the spiritual cultivation of the moral nature.** The soul before conversion like a barren heath, or desert, arid, &c. It must be cultivated, ploughed, sown, tilled. Much labour needful. Evil habits to be abandoned. Holy habits to be formed. Virtues to be grafted in; graces to be cherished. Hence duties, toils, and spiritual efforts necessary. Hence the exhortations, "Be diligent, &c.," "Work out your salvation, &c." Apply the subject—

III. To the influence of self-denial in adorning the Christian profession. Self-denial not the abandonment of sin, &c., but surrendering even of what might be lawfully retained. Hence the case of eating flesh, &c., as given by the apostle (Rom. xiv. 1). Now our habits, costume, conversation, spirit, must all be sacrificed, if God's glory and the good of others demand it. Our will sacrificed that God's may be done. Apply the subject—

IV. To the importance of usefulness in the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. This one great end of conversion. "I will bless thee and make thee a blessing, &c." *First*, the heart must be given to Christ; then life, talents, influence, time, wealth. If we will be useful, the cost must be paid; the law of self-sacrifice must rule us; ease, sordidness, &c., must be cast off. "Brethren, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, &c." These cases illustrate the subject. But I give additional thoughts. Not only must the cost be paid, but paid (1) In the right spirit. Not the spirit of ostentation for display; of self-righteousness for merit; of backwardness and grudgingly; but in humble, cheerful love to Christ. Felt to be a privilege as well as a duty. Need no force nor threatening. Not the whip, but the curb. As David in the text. "Freely we have received, &c." In the language of the poet—

"Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine."

(2) Observe, this cost paid in religion, is not equal to the demands of sin. Look at the sacrifice, the worldly, the proud, the sensual make. What money! what time! what energies! What peace! The way of transgressors is hard, and the end ruin. (3) To pay this cost in the service of Christ, grace is both necessary and provided. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "My grace is sufficient, &c." Grace must inspire the desire, purpose, and motive—give the ability and elasticity. The grace of God is provided abundantly. It was found so by Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul. Our subject, then, should—
1. *Lead to examination.* What has religion done for us? What have we done for it? What has it cost us? Have you the inward sense of God's full favour? Have you the testimony that you please God? 2. *It condemns two classes of persons.* Those who wish others to pay for their religion, and those who wish to have a costless religion. Not so David. Forget not—3. *That true religion is its own present reward.* Peace, hope, and joy, now; hereafter, the glories of a blissful eternity. Let the spirit of the text ever dwell in you. 4. *Address the sinner.* Who is indifferent to religion altogether. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, &c." [*J. Burns, D.D.*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 14-17. I. Judgments following sin. This a necessary, natural, and certain sequence. II. Judgments mixed with mercy. 1. Shortened in duration. 2. Ending in correction. "*Mercy rejoices over judgment.*" (1) The penitent man casts himself into the arms of God's mercy; (2) Mercy falls into the arms of justice, in order to stay its blows; punitive justice must yield to mercy at the command of the Lord. "It is enough: stay now thy hand" [*Lange*].

Vers. 16-20. 1. David's ready obedi-

ence. 2. David's willingness to suffer alone. 3. David's intercession for the people. "Most people, when judgments are abroad, charge others with being the cause of them, so they can escape; but David's penitent and public spirit was otherwise affected. As became a penitent he is severe upon his own faults, while he extenuates those of the people and intercedes for them."

Ver. 24. *Full price.* Apply to ministers and Sunday-schoolteachers in preparation for pulpit and class.

Vers. 22-27. I. *The altar purchased.*

(1) By divine instructions. Concerning place, person, and purpose. (2) By honourable transaction. In spirit of courtesy, generosity, and self-sacrifice. II. *The altar accepted.* Acceptance by fire, and hallowed by tokens of God's presence. III. *The altar perpetuated.* Partly to meet David's fears, also to fulfil God's purpose. Reverence for Divine Being led him to stay at the place, to make additional offerings and seek favour by earnest prayer. God was gracious, approved and sanctioned. Mount Moriah became a place of lawful and continual sacrifice. "*Rear an altar unto the Lord!*" (1) In obedience to the Lord's command; (2) With dedication of thyself, and what is thine, to the Lord's honour; (3) For the con-

tinual preservation of spiritual offerings, which are acceptable to the Lord; and (4) For the reception of the highest gift of grace, peace with the propitiated God" [*Lange*]. Chap. xxi. 1. David's sin. 2. David's self-reproach, penitence, and confession. 3. David's punishment. 4. David's supplication and expiatory offering. 5. David's forgiveness and restoration. *How God meets the presumptuousness of his favoured ones.* (1) He comes upon them with the edge of the sword; (2) His sword is not to kill, but to loose the chains of pride; (3) Where the sword of the Lord has done its work, there he builds his temple of peace [*J. Disselhoff*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 2. *The number.* This attempt to take the census was not unnaturally suggested by the increase of his power, but it implied a confidence and pride akin to the spirit inculcated on the kings of the chosen people [*Dean Stanley*].

Ver. 4. *King's word prevailed.* Wisdom is gotten by hearkening to good counsel, for none are born so naturally (Job xi. 12). "Many had proved wise if they had not thought themselves so" [*Bp. Hall*]. There cannot be a more worthy improvement of friendship than in a fervent opposition to the sins of those we love [*Ibid.*].

Vers. 9-15. *Punishment.* He that would be safe from the acts of evil must wisely avoid the occasions [*Bp. Hall*]. How hard a master he serves where the devil gives the employment, and shame is his entertainment, and sin is his work, and hell is his wages [*Bp. J. Taylor*]. "Sinners labour in the very fire."

Ver. 7. *God was displeased.*
"But Providence will intervene
To throw His dark displeasure o'er the
scene" [*Cowper*].

Ver. 17. *Plagued.* The great design, both in judgment and mercies, is to convince us that there is none like

the Lord our God; none so wise, so mighty, so good; no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable, so valuable [*Mt. Henry*]. O God, I have made an ill use of thy mercies, if I have not learnt to be content with thy corrections [*Bp. Hall*]. How sweetly doth God dispose of all second causes, that while they do their own will they do his [*Ibid.*].

Vers. 24-27. *Full price.* A bargain is sometimes as unmerciful as a robbery [*Nicholls*]. Kindness will dictate much in carrying on business which law cannot take cognizance of. It will preserve from the wretched practice of exclusive dealing, of punishing a man for his religion or politics by withholding custom; of making commerce the instrument of bigotry and exclusiveness, a practice which all condemn when they suffer from it, and all approve when they are advantaged by it. It will teach us to give a tender consideration to the cases of others, to treat inferiors with courtesy and gentleness, to pay respect to those whose circumstances make them apt to suspect unkindness, not to make a vigorous exaction of mere rights, to allow for unavoidable causes, and by studious care smooth the path of honest poverty [*A. J. Morris*].

CHAPTER XXII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The remaining chapters of this book are peculiar to the chronist. They narrate the arrangements of David for the building of the temple, his religious and political regulations, and his last will and death [*Murphy*]. This chapter, which consists entirely of new matter, helps to fill up the gap which had been left by the earlier authors between 2 Sam. xxiv. and 1 Kings i. [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-5.—*Preparations for the Temple.* This, the spot on which the altar was built, he regards as the site of the temple. Ver. 2. *Strangers*, non-Israelites, descendants of old Canaanites, war captives from whom exacted a tribute of bond-service (2 Chron. viii. 7-10), and war captives (2 Chron. ii. 7) reserved for the great work contemplated [*Jamieson*]. *Masons*, stone-cutters. Ver. 3. *Joinings*, braces or brackets for binding wood or stone. Ver. 4. *Zidon*, abounded in timber merchants and navigators (*cf.* 1 Kings v. 1, 15-18; 2 Chron. ii. 16). Ver. 5. *Tender*, exact age unknown. "It cannot have been more than 24 or 25. It may have been as little as 14 or 15" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 6-16.—*Charge to Solomon.* Ver. 6. *Called*, a short time before his death to give him special instructions. Ver. 7. *Mind*, heart (2 Sam. vii. 1-17). Ver. 8. *Blood*. This referred to in ch. xxviii. 3 and 1 Kings v. 17, though not in same terms. Nathan's message (ch. xvii. 4-14) assigned no ground for prohibition. In form of command here and the first intimation of reason why David must not build. On character of David's wars, *cf.* 2 Sam. viii. 2, x. 18, xii. 31; 1 Kings xi. 16. *Sol.*, "had two names—viz., Solomon, 'peaceful,' and Jedidiah, 'beloved of Jehovah' (2 Sam. xii. 25). The former name prevailed on account of this prophecy, which attached to the name the promise of a blessing" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Give peace* (1 Kings iv. 20-23, v. 4). Ver. 10. *Son* in peculiar and special manner. Ver. 11. *Prosper*, literally "The Lord shall be with thee, and thou shalt prosper. But future may have an imperative sense" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 12. *Wisdom* (*cf.* Ps. lxxii. 1; *Sol.*'s prayer, 1 Kings iii. 5-15). Ver. 13. *Strong*, words which are found in Deut. iv. 1, v. 1, vii. 4, xi. 32, xxxi. 6; Josh. i. 7. Ver. 14. *Trouble*, poverty. "By my strenuous labour, according to Gen. xxxi. 42; see the precisely similar expression (ch. xxix. 2), I have prepared with all my might" [*Keil*]. *Talents*, taking usual idea of talent, this would be more than eighty millions sterling. Either the talent of smaller value or text corrupted. "The latter is certainly the more probable supposition" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 15. *Cunning*, *i.e.*, skilful, serfs of ancient kingdoms very numerous (*cf.* 2 Chron. ii. 17).

Vers. 17-19.—*Charge to Princes.* Members of court, including other sons of David. Ver. 18. Reasons for liberality in giving. Ver. 19. *Set*, make this your purpose and effort; *holy* vessels used in tabernacle service.

HOMILETICS.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.—*Verses 1-5.*

This chapter and the seven which follow are supplementary to the Second Book of Samuel, and fill up the space between the end of that Book and the beginning of the First Book of Kings. Preparations for building going on for twenty-five or thirty years. In times of war and domestic affliction, David accumulated treasure and materials to be handed over to his successor.

I. The work for which he prepared. "This is house of the Lord God." Its building "exceeding magnificent." 1. *In the costliness of its materials.* Iron and brass, timber and stone, gold and silver. In the spiritual temple the materials are human beings, intellectual and immortal spirits. The preparation and forming of these materials into a temple for God includes the calling, regeneration, and consecration of men in Christ, "in whom all the building, fitly framed (exactly fitted) together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii. 20). 2. *In the grandeur of its design.* Not for earthly and inferior

objects. (1) For the honour of the great God, Lord of heaven and earth. "Build an house for the Lord God." (2) For the benefit of men. "Of fame and of glory throughout all countries." Reminding men of God's existence and claims; the centre of light and purity, bringing heaven down to earth, and securing the triumphs and praise of redeeming grace. **II. The incentives to the performance of this work.** There are many. 1. *Consider the greatness of the work.* More than the erection of a palace, the building of a city, the founding of an empire. A work agreeing with youth and age; affords scope for ambition, enthusiasm, and skill. 2. *Divine instructions are given to its performance.* God revealed the site, the plan, the ornaments, and all the arrangements for service. When way is known, walk in it. Knowledge given to practice. 3. *Good example inspires.* "Precepts teach, but examples draw." Man a creature of imitation by education and habit. A noble example interests, rouses attention, and stimulates to action. Illustrates the possibility and the manner of doing what is enjoined. David set a noble example. 4. *The circumstances of others should influence us.* "Solomon is young and tender." Others may not be situated, prepared, blessed as we are, may be weak, aged, and helpless. Consider the wants of the Church—men, money, and materials; the wants of the rising generation—good examples, education, and sympathy; the wants of the world—temples, Bibles, and missionaries. Care for the future, and if you cannot build, gather materials.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF GOD.—*Verses 1-5.*

This needful, urgent, and within the reach of all. I. *By personal effort.* David earnest, patient, and persevering; getting ready in prosperity and adversity. Warned by shortness of time, infirmity, and approaching end, "prepared abundantly before his death." II. *By initiation of the work.* Gather materials, begin or enter some work for God. Forethought is the best security against waste, idleness, and failure. An unfurnished minister, scholar, or church member cannot be "a wise master-builder." "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thine house." III. *By employment of willing helpers.* "Strangers" gathered together and enlisted in the service. Aliens (the non-Israelite population) hewed wood, carried burdens, &c. Often questioned whether help for building sanctuaries, supporting and maintaining religious institutions and worship, should be received from ungodly. But God urges every one to surrender to him. All our possessions are God's, and should be consecrated to him. Some are willing, others may be induced. Only cherish a liberal, kindly feeling, and they "shall be his servants, that they may know his service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

"All the means of action—
The shapeless masses, the materials,
Lie everywhere about us. What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into transparent crystal, bright and clear" [*Longfellow*].

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.—*Verses 6-16.*

Something more than dead materials required. Gold and silver nothing without willing hearts and active hands. David would gladly have done the work, but forbidden. Gives a touching and direct charge to incite Solomon to build. Learn—**I. That some originate a good work, but are not permitted to execute it.** David himself gives a special reason

(ver. 8). Hands stained with blood not fit to build a house of worship, the abode of love and peace. What a lesson! Sin may be forgiven, but a stain left behind. Present acts may influence future character, hinder holy work, decide the lot that should fall to us, or be lost by us. Cruelty and inconsistency will ever deprive of noble work and honour. **II. That others may be called to execute work which they never originated.** David prepared, and Solomon used the materials. "One soweth and another reapeth," and thus the work is carried on under a divine plan. A work for us, and a sphere appointed to do it. What matter middle, beginning, or end? No Christian effort, no man's life isolated. In our surroundings and duties our life's purpose is unfolded. 1. *They are specially designated for the work.* "He shall build an house." Cyrus called *by name* to do God's pleasure, and set captives free (Is. xliv. 28; xlv. 1). 2. *Opportunities are given them to work.* Solomon had rest from enemies, and Israel enjoyed "peace and quietness" in his days. Where God gives opportunity, leisure, and talent he expects work. If not done in time and place, may be left undone, or given to another. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" **III. That, when called, they should finish the work given them to do.** "Arise, therefore, and be doing" (ver. 16). 1. *The work is urgent.* "Arise, &c." We are apt to fall into apathy, formalism, and forgetfulness—to be absorbed by earthly cares, or overcome by temptation. Awake to holy zeal, intense concern for the Redeemer's work. 2. *God has promised help.* Need of men and money, sanctified intellects and eloquent tongues, broad shoulders and active hands; but with all, and more than all, the Lord's presence. Do we rely upon this? Are we earnestly desiring and praying for this? "The Lord be with thee, and prosper thee, &c." (ver. 11).

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Gather the strangers.* A notable type of the calling of the Gentiles; and the like we may say of the temples being built on the ground of a Jebusite, and by the help of Tyrians and Zidonians, and adorned with the spoils of divers nations (chap. xviii.) [*Trapp*].

Ver. 3. *Prepared.* Many parents prepare guilt in abundance, hoards and heaps of evil-gotten goods—and therewithal God's curse—to spend on their lusts, &c. As for pious and charitable uses, they cry out with Judas, Whereto is this waste? [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 5. *Magnificent.* The second temple was nothing like it, though the glory of it was greater (IIag. ii.), by the presence and preaching of Jesus Christ in it [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 9. *A son predicted.* I. Son of David; so was Christ. II. A man of rest; so was Christ. III. The giver of peace; so was Christ. IV. He had a significant name; so has Jesus Christ. V. He was a glorious king; so is

Christ. VI. His great work was the building of the temple; so is the work of Christ [*Bib. Museum*].

Vers. 11–13. *A father's prayer for his son.* 1. *For the possession of moral qualities.* 1. "Wisdom and understanding." Parents should be anxious for the education and religious welfare of children. Inheritance, wealth, and position nothing without this. Wisdom needed to turn all to good account. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding." 2. *Strength and moral courage.* "Be strong and of good courage." Ver. 13. Enemies and dangers cause "dread." In possession of sound wisdom and in vital alliance with God we are perfectly safe. Men without understanding and courage, out of place, weak and useless.

"Let not the world see fear and sad mistrust
Govern the motion of a kingly eye" [*Shakespeare*].

II. *For the presence of God.* "The Lord be with thee." A petition often repeated, too little understood; needful and appropriate to all times, undertakings, and places; the wish of every good father, and the prayer of every true Christian for an earnest worker. "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." III. *For successful undertaking.* "Prosper thou and build." All parents wish success to

children in every pursuit, possession of influence and authority, "charge over Israel." This often selfish, without reverent regard for the Lord's will. Be anxious for moral integrity and loyal obedience of youth. No prosperity without obedience to "the law of the Lord" and regard for his will. "Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes, &c."

"Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll
deserve it."

HOMILETICS.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESSFUL EFFORT.—*Verses 11-13.*

Time procured by our labours or help of others most profitably spent in God's service, utilising the preparations, improving the advantages, and carrying on the work of predecessors. But success only on certain conditions. **I. Personal fitness.** There must be ability, power, capacity, physical, intellectual, and moral. 1. *Wisdom to direct.* "Wisdom and understanding." Not worldly policy, human education, "earthly wisdom;" but "wisdom from above" (Jas. iii. 15-17), that "wisdom profitable to direct" (Ecc. x. 10). 2. *Strength to work.* Weakness, distrust, and hesitancy certain to fail. "Fortune favours the brave." "Woe unto him that is faint-hearted," says the son of Sirach. There must be no unfitness in act, heart, or capacity. **II. God's presence to help in its prosecution.** The word *only* (ver. 12) most suggestive, indicates entire failure without this. Skilful workmen, wise diplomatists, useful materials for work, may be needful, but divine help can never be dispensed with. The wisdom, the royal influence, and the powerful rule of Solomon not sufficient. "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." **III. Loyal obedience to God.** "Keep the law of the Lord." Success in departments of nature gained by submission to matter and co-operation with its laws. Our strength lies in "keeping the law." The throne of kings, the business of merchants, the prosperity of churches, established by obedience. "Observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

THE EARNEST APPEAL.—*Verses 17-19.*

Princes urged to help, to consecrate themselves first, for this the foundation of zeal; then reasons given for liberality in the work. This earnest appeal suggests—I. **That God has a temple to build among men.** "Build ye the sanctuary." 1. *A sanctuary to be built.* Not by earthly materials, but by "lively (*living*) stones" (1 Pet. ii. 5). A spiritual temple, a Christian church, as well as a material palace. 2. *A sanctuary to be furnished.* "Bring the ark and the holy vessels." Furnished not with pompous ceremonies and burning tapers, but with moral beauty, appropriate rites, spiritual songs, devout attendants, and the presence of God. This the work of Solomon on the throne, courtiers in the palace, and people in the cottage. Gather your materials, and

offer your gold and silver; give yourselves, and resolve "to help." **II. That to this work the Christian Church is called.** Not privileged to help in rearing the first or second temple, but earnestly called to this work. 1. *Called by favourable circumstances.* Land taken, inhabitants overcome, and rest given. Hindrances moved, and opportunities many. 2. *Called by the will of God.* Expressed in his word, by his servants, and by everything around us. 3. *Called by the urgency of the work.* "Arise, therefore, and be doing." Now is the time. Delay risky to yourselves and others. It is sinful in itself, and an evil example to others. **III. That a spirit of active zeal should characterise the prosecution of this work.** This designed by God in bestowment of gifts and arrangements of providence. "Now," because this done for you, "arise, therefore." 1. *The heart should be fixed on it.* Not the work of accident nor compulsion. Must be your choice and purpose. Energy, aim, and sympathy must be roused and fixed. Everything within us "set." 2. *Active excitement must be associated with constant labour.* Apt to fall into a state of apathy and formalism. Nothing can overcome indolence, temptation, and neglect but holy love, heavenly excitement, and burning zeal. The Church must awake to a lively, intense concern, to adopt, carry out every plan, and become a diligent, faithful, and working Church. Listen to the call, and remember the promise of God. Answer every foe with Nehemiah: "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 12. *The qualifications needed.* The source from whence they come. The design for which they are given. *Keep the law of the Lord thy God.* 1. God's will is a law. Not an opinion, creed, or counsel. Something laid down, revealed, with authority and publicity. 2. This law should be kept. "That thou mayest keep the law." Not given for mere study, information, or speculation, but for practice in life. 3. Obedience to this law is wisdom. It secures physical health, "length of days and long life." It improves the powers of mind, and enlarges the sphere of usefulness. It is "a crown of glory," and the highest possible good, the *summum bonum* to men. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding."

Ver. 19. *Seeking after God.* I. The occasion on which this injunction was given. II. The injunction itself.

I. The great object of our life. 2. In what way we are to prosecute it. And now (1) Avail yourselves of the opportunities afforded for public usefulness; (2) Begin with a surrender of your whole souls to God [*C. Simeon, M.A.*]. *The Important Search.* I. The object searched. "The Lord your God." An object supremely great and glorious, the perfection of all beings, the fountain of life and glory. Seek his favour, grace, and presence. II. The method of search. Naturally without God, yet our duty and privilege to seek, find, and serve him. 1. *Earnestly.* "Heart and soul engaged." No fits and starts, not half-heartedness. 2. *Resolutely.* "Set your heart." Nothing accomplished without fixed purpose. God the sublimest object on which we can fix our hearts. He is merciful and loveworthy. "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXII.

Vers. 1-5 and 14-16. *David prepared.* "Let those things," says an author, "which are obviously most

important and necessary be done *first*, and the less urgent afterwards. Let not a man *begin business* by building

and expensively furnishing a fine house. Let the land be first cultivated. Let your business, whatever its nature, be faithfully and diligently minded and well-established, as far as human industry can effect, or human foresight calculate. Be content, in the meantime, with inferior accommodation. A man should have property well realised and secured before he enters on schemes of expensive building. He must not, with sanguine infatuation, appropriate the very first proceeds of his trade to the erection of a *palace to live in.*"

"When we mean to build,
We first survey the plot; then draw the model;
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we rate the cost of the erection;
Which, if we find outweighs ability,
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices, or at least desist
To build at all? &c." [*Shakespeare*].

Vers. 6-10. *A son.* If we would "mend the world we should mend ourselves,

and teach our children to be not what we are, but what they should be" [*W. Penn*].

Vers. 12, 13. *Prosper.* "Man's wisdom consists in observing God's unalterable appointments and suiting himself to them" [*Scott*]. Then the way of God's precepts leads to the enjoyment of his promises. Thou meetest him that worketh righteousness.

Ver. 18. *Be doing.* A pious Scotch lady, Mrs. Duncan, remarked, "I feel that my heart is apt to grow to weeds, it needs the safeguard of steady employment." "Doing nothing is doing ill." "Life accordingly is a delight, just in the degree that it is consecrated to action, or the conscious, volitional exercise of our noblest capabilities. Action and enjoyment are contingent upon each other; when we are unfit for work we are always incapable of pleasure; work is the wooing by which happiness is won" [*L. Grindon*].

CHAPTER XXIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This and following three chapters contain an account of Levites and distribution of their services. Here their number, classification, and work (vers. 1-6). But vers. 6-32 give heads of houses composing the four Levite families and their offices.

Ver. 1.—*King.* For full particulars cf. 1 Kings i. "The author of Chronicles, who does not concern himself with the domestic history of David, naturally omits the circumstances, and merely states the fact" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 2-5.—*Number and distribution of the Levites. Princes.* David made arrangements with Levites in their assembly (cf. xxv. 1). *Thirty*, Mosaic census followed (Num. iv. 3). None counted who exceeded 50 years by *man*, i.e., reckoning men only. *Judges*, local magistrate (chap. xxvi. 29). "This office resembled that of the modern Mahometan *Cadi*" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Porters* (ver. 5), door-keepers by night and day. "Ps. cxxxiv. is the chant of the night sentries" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 6-23.—*Houses or families of Levites.* Enumeration of all Levites, afterwards distributed into their classes. *Courses*, divisions definitely numbered and arranged by David. Vers. 7-11. *The Gershonites* (Ex. vi. 6). *Laadan*, called *Libni* (chap. vi. 17, cf. use in Ex. vi. 17; Num. iii. 18). *Shimeï*, not that of ver. 7, but another, cf. ver. 10. Ver. 10. *Zina*, marg. *Zizah*. Ver. 11. *Not many* and did not make separate houses. Vers. 12-20. *The Kohathites* (Ex. vi. 16). *Separated*, therefore not counted in the number (ver. 3). *Burn incense* (cf. Ex. xxx. 7, 8; Num. vi. 23-27). *Named* (ver. 14) not like those of Aaron (ver. 13). Ver. 15. *Moses* (cf. Ex. xviii. 3, 4). Ver. 16. *Shebuel* (cf. xxiv. 20). Ver. 18. *Shel*, the founder or head. Vers. 21-23. *Sons of Merari*, two chiefly given (Num. iii. 20; 1 Chr. vi. 19), but 1 Chr. xxiv. 26 seems to give a third son.

Vers. 24-27.—*Sons of Levi. Polls* (ver. 3). *Twenty*, thirty previously fixed. Certain lighter duties imposed at 25 (Num. viii. 24), but only liable for full service at 30 years. David made a change. The temple would require a more numerous ministry since the ark ceased to be carried from place to place. This limit continued in after times as David fixed it. Ver. 27. *Last orders or arrangements.* Some understand a historical work, drawn up by Gad or Nathan, or a work of directions for the service of the sanctuary.

Vers. 28-30.—*Purifying, i.e.,* washing holy things; *shevebread* (Lev. xxiv. 5-9); *fine flour*, materials for all chief kinds of meat offerings (*cf.* Lev. ii. 1-5; vi. 14, 15; xxiii. 13); *cakes*, must be rightly made, &c.; *measure* of liquids and things dry fixed by law (Ex. xxix. 40; Lev. vi. 20; Num. xv. 4-10).

Ver. 31.—*By number*, exact number of cattle to be offered at various festivals fixed by law (Num. xxviii. 9-11; xxix. 8-13).

Ver. 32.—*Keep*, duties of Levites here summed up in words from Num. xviii. 3-6. "This passage (verses 8 to 32) gives the most complete account to be found in Scripture of the nature of the Levitical office" [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE SACRED TRIBE: ITS CALLING AND ITS DUTIES.—*Verses 2-5.*

In view of death, David called a representative assembly. Solomon succeeds him, and he wishes to arrange for the service of the temple. The Levites called to officiate; here classified in order and houses, with distribution and general regulations for work. **I. The sacred calling of the tribe.** "To set forward the work of the house of the Lord." "Their office to wait on the sons of Aaron" (vers. 28, 29), and "to offer"—to help in the offering of "burnt sacrifices" (vers. 31, 32). This a noble, "a high calling." Notice—1. *The legal age of entering the work.* "From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old" (Num. iv. 3); then reduced to twenty-five years (Num. viii. 24), and now fixed "from the age of twenty years and upward" (ver. 24). 2. *The numbers engaged in the work.* Thirty-eight thousand, an increase of more than fourfold since the time of Moses (Num. iv. 47, 48). What a proof of God's power and grace, who can make his servants "a thousandfold more." Considered a privilege to belong to the retinue of an earthly monarch. What must it be to be numbered with the household of God on earth, and with the innumerable company in heaven! **II. The special duties of the tribe.** We have four classes given (vers. 4 and 5), which are afterwards described in detail—1. *The overseers.* Twenty-four thousand, including priests and attendants, to (set forward) superintend (ver. 4). They had under their charge the younger Levites and servants of the sanctuary, devoted to menial duties (ix. 2). 2. *The judges.* Administrators of civil affairs "for the outward business of Israel" (2 Chr. xix. 5-11). *Officers* mentioned early (Ex. v. 6), generally foremen; *judges* concerned with religious matters chiefly. 3. *The musicians*, who praised on instruments—"cymbals, psalteries, harps, trumpets" (2 Chr. v. 12)—which David might approve or appoint, but not invent for service. He was given to music, and desired, in his latter days, to give example of its use. Handel declared, when he finally resolved to consecrate himself to sacred music, "that it was better suited to a man descending in the vale of years." 4. *The porters.* At gates, guarding entrance of improper persons, and keeping from profanation and divine displeasure. In such service we may engage, leading in the song, and perfecting the praise of the sanctuary; administering law and government; creating, preserving, and perpetuating reverence and truth in all things.

THE SACRED TRIBE: ITS HEADS AND ARRANGEMENTS.—*Verses 6-24.*

After giving number and divisions of Levi according to duties, we have next an enumeration of heads of houses into which the four families branched, with a brief account of their work. **I. The houses of Gershon** (vers. 6-11). This branches into two—six families for *Laadan*, and three for Shimei; nine houses altogether. **II. The houses of Kohath** (vers. 11-20). Aaron

not reckoned because specially set apart. His sons form subject of ch. xxv. 1-19. Hence such descendants of Amram noticed which belonged to Moses, whose sons were numbered among Levites generally, and did not belong to that part to whom priestly duties were assigned. Kohath, the founder of nine fathers' houses (mentioned ch. xxiv. 20-25). To these must be added the priests through Aaron and his sons, two houses, making eleven in all.

III. The houses of Merari (vers. 21-23). Two sons as two leading branches, *Machli* and *Mushi* (Ex. vi. 19; Num. iii. 33). Merari is third son of Levi (Gen. xlvi. 11). As there are four houses for him, nine for Gershon, and eleven for Kohath, we have twenty-four in all of the sons of Levi. Some give Merari six, and the others nine each, which makes the same number.

IV. The arrangements of the Levites (vers. 24-32). By the last words of David, at the end of his life, new arrangements were made. He thought it would contribute to the glory of God to have as many officers as possible in divine service. 1. *The enrolment of office was changed.* The rule was to begin at 30 years; for two reasons he relaxed this. *First*, Jerusalem was the chosen city, and there would be no more moving from place to place. *Second*, the carrying of the tabernacle was not needed any longer. 2. *The duties of office are arranged.* Detailed in a few items. Aaron's sons had higher office in *the service of the house of the Lord*. Service in *the courts* (Ex. xxvii. 9); *the chambers* as judges; and in religious work generally. Levites helped in this service, had "to wait on the sons of Aaron." Several things mentioned—(1) *Keeping things clean.* "Purifying, i.e., cleansing of all holy things" (ver. 28). Holy places, garments, vessels, and sacrifices. (2) *Getting things ready.* The *shewbread* for priests to arrange on the table; *fine flour* morning and evening in just quantity for meat-offering; *unleavened cakes* rightly made. (3) *Adjusting weights and measures.* Standards of which were considered sacred, kept in the sanctuary, and not to be altered in liquids (wine, oil, &c.) or dry goods. (4) *Blowing with their instruments.* Every morning and night "to praise the Lord" in sounding their trumpets (Num. x. 10). (5) *Offering sacrifices.* "To offer all burnt sacrifices" (ver. 31). Priests alone sprinkled the blood, trimmed the fire on the altar, and lay the parts of the victim on it. Levites did everything preparatory and needful to these priestly acts. Sacrifices offered in right *number* (2 Sam. ii. 15; Num. xxviii. 1-31), and at *set feasts*: Passover (Lev. xxiii. 4, 5); Pentecost (Lev. xxiii. 15-17); and Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 33-37). (6) *Guarding the tabernacle.* "Keep the charge of the tabernacle" (ver. 32). Charge of the tent of meeting, of holy apparatus, to have everything fit, orderly, and ready for special functions of priests. (7) *Attendance on priests.* "The charge of the sons of Aaron, their brethren." Thus service honourable and menial, orderly and regular. Nothing a *drudgery*, but pleasant, joyful, and devout.

"Who sweeps a room as for God's laws
Makes that and the action fine" [Herbert].

THE THREEFOLD FUNCTIONS.—Verse 13.

The posterity of Aaron advanced to dignity and the priest's office to "sanctify the most holy things." Their office here described as threefold. 1. *To make atonement.* Offer burnt incense upon the golden altar in the holy place. For a "stranger to come near" and do this would incur prompt punishment (Num. xvi. 40). Incense-burning a preliminary to morning and accompaniment of evening sacrifice (Ex. xxx. 7, 9; Lu. i. 9, 10), and a special part of ceremony on Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 11-13). Amid sudden danger and impending wrath, the priest took the censer of incense "to make atonement" (Num. xvi. 46, 47). No

priesthood, no office like this now; but regarding this as typical of diffusive influence and specific intercession, the minister of the gospel may be an intercessor for his people, render acceptable service and point to the atonement for sin and the Mediator between God and man. 2. *To minister to God for man.* "To minister unto him." This a privilege and within the power of every one. The Christian minister specially called, and set apart for this work. In prayer, preaching, and daily work, he should minister to God. 3. *To bless man for God.* "To bless in his name." None have power to bless and bestow grace in themselves. But first receiving light and life they give—speak of God's favour to men, offer pardon and assure of acceptance. They represent God in their ministry; bring down the influence of Heaven in their walk; and seek to recover fallen men from sin and death. "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel" (Num. vi. 23).

THE REST OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.—Verse 25.

I. In the mysterious polity of the people of Israel, spiritual and temporal blessings were so closely allied that the same language might naturally be employed to signify either. II. Hence David hinted at profounder truths than lie on the surface of his words. III. It becomes us to secure the great blessing—the rest that remaineth—as the chief object of existence. IV. Rest and peace must fall on a Christian spirit—(1) From the imitation of Christ; (2) The singleness of its object; (3) The nature of the Christian affections; (4) To support and exalt us, heaven must mingle with earth [*A. Butler*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. 1. *An instructive view of life.* "Old and full of days." Life made up of days, not years. Day by day given until the numbers appointed (Job xiv. 5) are filled up, finished. "There is no elixir of life," says one, "that can prolong our days beyond that period. Soon we shall come to the outer limit; then we must die." Isaac died, being "old and full of days." 2. *A touching picture of old age.* As a portrait made up of minute touches, so old age in character, habits, hopes, and condition. It has peculiar comeliness and attractiveness of its own when crowned with piety. Piteable to see an old man who has missed the object of life and spent his days in folly. "The sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." But "the hoary head is a crown of gold, if it be found in the way of righteousness." 3. *A solemn warning to all.* The end sure in youthful days or "full of days." "Old age is near neighbour to death." Understand life before you leave it.

If ready to depart we can say cheerfully, *Nunc dimittis*.

Ver. 14. *Moses the man of God; the honourable appellation.* Given to Moses five times in the whole of Scripture—once in the Pentateuch (Deut. xxxi. 1), once in Joshua (xiv. 6), twice in Chronicles (here and in 2 Chr. xxx. 16), and once in Ezra (iii. 2). It is also assigned thrice to David (2 Chr. viii. 14; Neh. xii. 24, 36), and once to the prophet Shemaiah (1 Kings xii. 22). "Man of God," without the article, is common [*Speak. Com.*]. 1. Specially called and qualified for God's work. 2. Privileged with close and familiar intercourse with God. Face to face with God and "the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." 3. Divinely taught to declare the will of God. "With him will I speak mouth to mouth." "The law was given by Moses." 4. Faithfully carried on the work of God. "My servant Moses who is faithful in all my house." God gave orders. Moses verily was faithful as

a servant (Heb. iii. 5), and obedient in carrying them out. 5. Wonderfully honoured by God at the end. God buried him. "There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." "We must think and speak honourably of saints departed" [*Trapp*].

Vers. 28-32. *Waiting in service.*
1. In active work. 2. In orderly worship. 3. In devout supplication. 4. In watching attitude.

"God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who
best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best;
his state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait"
[*Milton*].

Rest an argument for service. 1. Rest affording opportunity. 2. Specially designed for service. 3. Service, individual, orderly, and varied. Service entered upon early, and patiently conducted. *Morning and evening thanks.* Needful, demanded, and should be willingly given. "Every day will I praise thee." "Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud" (Psalm lv. 17). "Pray without ceasing."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1. *Old.* I venerate old age, and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding [*Longfellow*].

Ver. 6. *Courses.* If there be any beauty and comeliness in order, where should we most expect to find it than in the divine government, and in the conduct and management of the affairs of the supreme and the celestial kingdom, wherein only the remoteness of those things from our sense makes everything seem little and inconsiderable [*J. Howe*].

"All things are infinite in parts, and the moral is as the material.

Neither is anything vast, but it is compacted of atoms" [*Martin Tupper*].

Vers. 6 and 30. *Instruments and praise.* In order to the high result intended, the music of religion must be religious. There must be a distinction of sounds. As this language is given for the heart, it becomes a first principle that it must be of the heart, else it is an unknown tongue. And so true is this, that nothing really can fulfil the idea of religious music which is not the breathing of true love and worship. Even *instruments* without life will not speak the true notes of power unless the touch of faith is on them, and the breath of holy feeling is in them; how much less the *voice* itself, whose very qualities of sound are inevitably toned by the secret feeling of the spirit [*Dr. H. Bushnell*].

CHAPTER XXIV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] In this chapter we have divisions of the 24 orders of priests (vers. 1-19), and the classes of Levites who attended them in discharge of their sacred functions.

Vers. 1-6.—*The sons of Aaron.* The *divisions* supply from ver. 6 of chap. xxiii. The author had there stated that "to the sons of Levi David assigned their courses." He now adds, "To the sons of A. also (David assigned) their courses. The sons of A. (were) Nadab, &c." [*Speak. Com.*]. *Both, i.e., Zad. and Ahim., assisted David.* Ver. 4.

Chief, more heads of houses. Ver. 5. *Lot*, that is, the assignment of their order in the courses made by lot to the families belonging to both E. and Ith. *Governors or princes of the sanctuary.* Ver. 6. *Wrote*, as lots were drawn forth. *Taken* alternately.

Vers. 7-19.—The allotted order. Some names in this list found elsewhere and others not. Ver. 10. *Abijah*, Abia (Lu. i. 5; Neh. x. 7). Ver. 11. *Jeshuah*, whose descendants returned from captivity (Ez. ii. 6; Neh. vii. 39). Ver. 12. *Eliashib*, not progenitor of the one in Neh. iii. 1, 20, 21. Ver. 15. *Hezir*, as a layman (cf. Neh. x. 20). Ver. 16. *Peth.*, one of those who separated themselves from alliances contracted in captivity (Ez. x. 23; Neh. ix. 5). Ver. 17. *Jachin* (cf. chap. ix. 10; Neh. xi. 10), probably the Achim of Matt. i. 14. Ver. 19. *Orderings*, the charge as ver. 3. *Under*, by the hand of Aaron. *Commanded*, a constant expression in the law of Moses (Ex. xxxix. 42; Lev. xxvii. 34; Num. xxxvi. 13; Deut. xxxiv. 9).

Vers. 20-31.—Distribution of other Levites. The rest. Object of this second enumeration of the Levitical families (cf. xxiii. 7-23) seems to be the designation of the heads of the families in David's time. The omission of the Gershonites is curious, and can only be accounted for by supposing that the author did not find any account of their heads in his authorities. The addition to the Merarites (vers. 26, 27) is also curious. It brings the number of families up to 25, which is one more than we should have expected [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 21. *Rehabi*. (cf. chap. xxiii. 17). Ver. 22. *Shel.*, Shelomith in chap. xxiii. 18, a different person from Amramite Shel. (cf. chap. xxvi. 25, 26). He was probably not a contemporary of David, as the head of the family in David's time was Jahath [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 26. *Beni*, not really a name; *Heb.* for *his son*, and to be attached to Jaaziah. The meaning of the whole passage (vers. 26-30) seems to be that there were three branches of the Merarites—the Beni-Mahli, the Beni-Mushi, and the Beni-Jaaziah—of whom the first formed a mighty house in David's time, viz., the Beni-Kish, their head being Jerahmeel, while each of the other branches comprised three families, the heads of which were respectively in David's time Shoham, Zaccur, Ibrî, and Mahli, Eder, Jerimoth [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 31. *Principal*, "all the Levitical houses enumerated drew lots in their courses on equal terms, the elder families having no advantage over the younger ones," as there were 24 courses of the priests, so we must suppose that there were 24 of the Levites, though the number of the families as given in the text (chap. xxiii. 7-23; xxiv. 20-30) is 25 [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE DIVISIONS OF PRIESTS (SONS OF AARON).—Verses 1-19.

The word "divisions" means courses, as ver. 6 in chap. xxiii. ; and evidently continues the subject and construction of that verse. Two sons of A. died, and the other two supply "the chief men of the house," viz., 16 from Eleazar and 8 from Ithamar, 24 in all. **I. Divisions to facilitate work.** Divided more easily performed. "Many hands make light work." Burdens equalised carried better. Jealousies are prevented and a true spirit created. "Be not *solitary*, be not *idle*," a saying of Burton. **II. Divisions by lot** (ver. 5). No ground of choice between the two families, who differed only in number, and as the highest places had already been filled by both of them, the impartiality of lot to settle the order of service. 1. *Lot appointing to dignified work.* "For the governors (or princes) of the sanctuary" (ver. 5). High priests who exclusively could enter into the most holy place before God [*Keil*]. 2. *Lot publicly taken.* "Shem., the scribe, wrote them before the king" (ver. 6). Openly before witnesses and a clerk acting as secretary to scrutinise. Before king, princes, and priests the act most solemn. Fraud and suspicion impossible. "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." **III. Divisions in specific order** (vers. 7-19). Order essential to existence and efficiency. Men who seek pre-eminence and power create disorder, anarchy, and ruin. Well-ordered words make good logic; well-ordered regulations preserve the social constitution; and well-set stones make architecture. Order in God's house and service secures regularity, beauty, and efficiency; excludes what is called "good fortune," happy "hits," and points to the divine side of life on its appointment. No "chance" work; all appears to be settled by law. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

THE DEATH OF NADAB AND ABIHU.—*Verse 2.*

The story strange, and understood only by intimate acquaintance with the Jewish system and the prevailing sentiments of the time. Nadab and Abihu had been honoured with special privileges, but unduly exalted themselves, became proud, negligent, and presumptuous. Learn from their death—I. **That sin inverts the natural order of things.** “They died before their father.” “Sin,” as “transgression of law,” creates confusion and disorder. It overturns and inverts. What more natural than a son to outlive his father: but wickedness shortens life, and brings untimely death. II. **That sin deprives of blessings which God can bestow.** They “had no children.” Children great blessings, “a heritage from the Lord.” To be childless, under Jewish dispensation, considered calamity. Profane the name of God, and you may be cut off from high honour, just lineage, and blessed memory. The righteous alone can secure posthumous fame. “The memory of the just is blessed.” III. **That sin often overwhelms with fearful ruin.** They died not a natural death. “There went out fire from the Lord and devoured them.” A punishment sudden and severe, awful and retributive (Lev. x. 1-4). Indicative of their heinous guilt, and God’s jealousy in punishing it. IV. **That sin is often mentioned in history to warn of its consequences.** This special sin frequently mentioned in Scripture. “By this awful judgment the wisdom of God observed the same course, in repressing the first instance of contempt for sacred things, as he did at the commencement of the Christian dispensation (Acts v. 1-11).” “The temple mouse fears not the temple idol,” is a proverb. Those who minister in holy things need be careful not to arrogate to themselves the glory which belongs to God, but ever keep before them the solemnity and responsibility of that service in which they are engaged.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE LEVITES.—*Verses 20-31.*

The *rest* refers to those not of the sons of Aaron, and does not exhaust non-priestly class, for we find in following two chapters others who were singers, doorkeepers, and treasurers. Two families given chiefly. Gershonites found among officers and judges. 1. *The family of Kohath* (vers. 20-25). 2. *The family of Merari* (vers. 26-29). 3. *The three sons of Mushi* (vers. 30, 31). These all content with an inferior “lot,” anxious to do their best, and joyfully contributing to the whole. “They were arranged by lot to match the courses of their brethren, the sons of Aaron, in the presence of the same superiors.” “The principal fathers,” or the chief over against his lesser brother. Each, great and small, his place and his work, and acting under “the great Taskmaster’s eye.” “Let every man be *occupied*, and occupied in the highest employment of which he is capable, and die with the consciousness that he has done his best” [*Sidney*].

“A wise man scorneth nothing, be it never so small or homely,
For he knoweth not the secret laws that may bind it to great effects”
[*Martin Tupper*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Sad deaths.* I. *The sins which caused them.* 1. Disobedience to divine injunction. “They offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.” 2. Gross inconsistency. Perhaps they were drunk, hence the law (Lev. x. 8). “They drink and forget the law” (Prov. xxxi. 5).

3. Rashness in approaching God. They "took," *snatched* (some read ver. 1), their censers without reverence and consideration; rushed into God's presence in haste. 4. Presumptuous in act. Not only did they take "strange incense," but went both together when one only should have officiated; intruded into the holy of holies, to which access denied to all but high priest, and thus set a precedent most dangerous, and which called for divine displeasure. 11. *The punishment which followed the sins.* "They died." 1. A dishonourable death. "Without children." 2. A sudden death. "Fire came out" suddenly. 3. An overwhelming death. Instantly died as if struck by a lightning-flash. 4. A retributive death. "Before the Lord." Before the veil that covered the mercy-seat. "Without mercy," and without divine interference. A forecast of torment "in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 10). "God will be sanctified either actively or passively, either in us or upon us; sure it is that he will be no loser by us. Sanctified he will be, either in the sincerity of men's conversation or else in the severity of their condemnation. Singular things are expected of all that draw nigh to God in any duty, but especially in the office of the ministry. Those that stand in the presence of princes must be exact in their carriages. God appointed both the weights and measures of the sanctuary to be twice

as large as those of the commonwealth, to show that he expects much more of those that serve him there than he doth of others. The souls of priests must be purer than sunbeams, saith Chrysostom" [*Trapp*].

Vers. 5-30. *Remarkable persons.* Ver. 5. *Governors (Heb.), Princes of the house of God.* Chief priests rulers over others of their own order, and subject to the high priest. Submission and diligence give distinction in calling. "C'est par le travail qu'on regne" [*Louis XIV.*]. If translation be *Princes of Holiness*, then holiness gives influence and power; distinction of character and approbation of God. Good men are kings of society. Ver. 7. *Jehoiarib*, the father of the Maccabees (1 Macc. ii 1). Ver. 10. From *Abijah* came *Zacharias*, father of John the Baptist (Lu. i. 5). "Old he was, yet not free from taking his turn. Dumb also for a time; yet he went on to do his office in the ministraton. The evangelist's word of *the course* (Grk. *epi* and *ēmerius*, a daily service) importeth a daily attendance upon the work while the course continueth" [*Trapp*].

Ver. 23. *Sons of Hebron.* The four persons named appear to have been contemporaries of David, the heads of the Hebronite houses in his time (*cf.* ch. xxvi. 31) [*Speak. Com.*]. "What shall I do to be for ever known?" asked Schiller. Scripture will give the answer.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 2. *Died.* It is a dangerous thing in the service of God to decline from his own institutions; we have to do with a God who is wise to prescribe his own worship, just to require what he has prescribed, and powerful to revenge what he has not prescribed [*By. Hall*].

Vers. 5 and 31. *Lot.* Methods are the masters of masters [*Tullerand*].

Method is essential, and enables a larger amount of work to be got through with satisfaction. "Method," said the Rev. R. Cecil, "is like packing things in a box: a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one." Cecil's despatch of business was extraordinary, his motto being, "The shortest way to do many things is to do one thing at once" [*Smiles*].

CHAPTER XXV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter relates to the number and offices of the singers (vers. 1-8); a list of the choirs divided by lot into 24 orders (vers. 9-31).

Vers. 1-8.—The families of singers. Captains, chiefs who preside over the order of service; those mentioned, xxiii. 2; xxiv. 6. Separated, divided or distributed for the service. *Prophesy*, publicly recite the sacred service, sing psalms; a reference to the praising element. *Ver. 2. Hands*, direction of A., who prophesied as an inspired poet, composed psalms (Ps. 1. 73-83). *Ver. 3. Six*, only 5 names given; entire list only 23, which should be 24 according to the account of lots (vers. 8-31); supply a name (as Sept.), Shimei, which appears in ver. 17. *Vers. 4, 5. Uz.* (cf. ver. 18); *Shub.* (ver. 20). *King's seer*, not to distinguish H. above his brethren (cf. 2 Chr. xxix. 30; xxxv. 15). All three possessed prophetic gifts. *Words, matters (marg.). Lift up horn.* Blow with horn or trumpet loudly, a fig. expression for honour and dignity (1 Sam. ii. 1, 10; Ps. lxxv. 10; lxxxix. 17). *Ver. 6. These* refers to Heman. *According*, the reading should be, "At the king's hands were Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman," or under the direction of the king, of A., of Jed., and of H. *Ver. 8. Ward* formerly signified a class or division; the term is still used in hospitals: trans. "for the ward (charge) for as well the small as the great, the teacher with the scholar" [*Murphy*].

Vers. 9-31.—The list of choir leaders. Asaph was given the precedence over his brethren, and his four courses were assigned the first, and then each alternate place. Jeduthun took rank next, and received alternate places, first with Asaph, and then with Heman, until his courses were exhausted. After this, all the later places fell necessarily to Heman, whose courses continue without interruption from the 15th to the 24th. This scheme for the apportioning of the courses among the three families must have been a matter of formal arrangement. What the lot decided was simply, on each occasion, which course of the family, whose term it was, should fill the place [*Speak. Com.*]. "The series is so determined by the lot, that the four sons of Asaph hold the first, third, fifth, and seventh places; the six sons of Jeduthun the second, fourth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, and fourteenth places" [*Keil*].

HOMILETICS.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SINGERS AND MUSICIANS.—Verses 1-8.

David had settled the courses of Levites who attended to the priests in their ministrations; now he arranges those appointed to sing and play. Three families of choristers. **I. Their solemn consecration.** "Separated to the service." No disputing, nor taking by force; no self-electing, nor promotion by favour; each carefully appointed to his place and work. No small honour to be separated from the world and called into the family and service of God. Greater honour and responsibility to be further "separated from the congregation of Israel," to be brought nearer to God, and "to stand before the congregation and minister unto them" (Num. xvi. 9). **II. Their sacred employments.** These manifold and necessary. 1. *Prophets with harps.* To reveal the will of God in song; sing psalms indited by the spirit of God. Musical instruments to rouse and quicken the prophetic spirit. This often the method to soothe the mind, to prepare for the work of praise and prayer. Room for instruments yet in service of God; above all, be filled with the spirit, sing with the spirit, and make melody with the heart (Eph. v. 18, 19). 2. *Players of instruments.* Heman presided over the wind instruments, and Jeduthun over the harp, to keep time and observe order. *Music* may help song; refine and educate the worshippers of the sanctuary. "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." 3. *Superintendents of order.* "Captains of the host" (ver. 1), those who helped David to arrange and superintend the order of worship; leaders of

the courses of priests and Levites, before whom lots were cast; chiefs of the sacred order. Captains of armies held responsible positions; to be leaders in God's house a more distinguished privilege and honour. 4. *All this designed to honour God.* Music, instrumental and vocal; choirs and leaders "instructed" (ver. 7) and employed "to give thanks and praise the Lord" (ver. 3). This delightful and "comely to the upright." Fresh cause for praise every time we enter God's house. If no other theme than the love of Christ, which employs the tongues of heaven, this enough to stir up and perpetuate grateful emotion on earth. **III. Their astonishing number.** Every choir, with its leader, consisted of 12, and the 24 choirs contained 288 choristers ($288 = 12 \times 24$), who served a week in rotation. "These, half of whom officiated every week with a proportionate number of assistants, were skilful and experienced musicians, capable of leading and instructing the general musical corps, which comprised no less than 4,000 (ch. xxiii. 5)" [*Jamieson*].

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF SERVICE.—Verses 1-31.

Many special elements of worship set forth. I. *Pleasing variety.* Male and female (ver. 5), small and great, teacher and scholar" (ver. 8), prophesying with harps, psalteries, and cymbals (ver. 1). Variety helps to discriminate and recognise persons, to classify into systems and impersonate with names. "Variety is charming," attractive and beneficial in natural scenery and Christian worship. II. *Heartly thanksgiving.* Most solemn and delightful to hear a large assembly sing and praise the Lord. May be "like a little heaven below," or the sweet earnest of the "song of Moses and the Lamb." III. *Cultured song.* "They were instructed in the songs of the Lord" (ver. 7). If a regular trained or cultured choir is impossible, there is no excuse for the slovenly songs which dishonour many sanctuaries. If spirituality of subjects and proper frame of heart be an apology, on the same principle may we tolerate bad reading and wretched delivery. Why should harmonious themes of devotion be rendered unpleasant to the outward ears, when a little care and culture, spirit and energy might correct many defects in religious assemblies? IV. *Orderly performance.* This observed and insisted upon. All classes and ages co-operated; instruction imparted and music regulated for desired end. Order is economy of time and work, for without it both are lost. The world began and is ruled with order. Method should characterise our studies, habits, and worship. V. *Kindly feeling.* Some dutiful and obedient as *sons*; others acted and loved as *brethren*. No partiality, dissatisfaction, nor uncharitableness. All united in feeling, purpose, and effort "for the service of the house of God." "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Let us learn to adapt these ancient rules to modern requirements. Worship should not be stereotyped, lawless, nor irreverent, but room for improvement in psalmody, arrangement, and spirituality.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Workmen according to their service.* 1. Each a part in worship. None silent, none idle. 2. Work no drudgery, no slavery, no reluctance to perform it. 3. "It intimates that it is our duty to make a business of it, and stir up all that is within us to it;

and that in our present state of corruption and infirmity it will not be done as it should be done, without labour and struggle. We must take pains with our hearts to bring them and keep them to this work, and to engage all that is within us." *The*

workmen. The use of this noble word in association with the choral service of the sanctuary is a warning against regarding such service as a dilettante employment. It is a *work* and *labour* in the honourable service of the Lord, and one that was anciently dignified with the name of prophecy. The use of the word for His ministers was adopted by our Lord when He said, "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Matt. x. 10); and was among the last injunctions that fell from the one who "laboured more abundantly than you all," when he exhorted the young bishop Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim. ii. 15) [*Blunt*]. *Psalteries*. *Psalmody in God's house*. Spiritual in its nature, metrical (musical) in its form, cultured in its development. The bearing of these subjects on selection of hymns and tunes, training of choirs, and irreverent singing.

Vers. 5, 6. *A family choir*. The fathers Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman

presided, and their children *were under the hands of their father* (vers. 2, 3, 6). This (1) an example of parental training, (2) of obedience in children, (3) of younger submitting to elder in judgment and conduct. This gives order and honour to families, churches, and communities. *In the words of God* (ver. 5). "I wish the time were come," says Andrew Fuller, "when we could lay aside all men's compositions and sing only the words of Scripture in the praises of God." When shall we find the poet and "the chief musician"?

Ver. 7. *Number*. A number competent, skilful, orderly, and devout. What a pattern choir! All may imitate their spirit and follow their example. "As it is commanded of God that all should sing, so all should make a conscience of *learning* to sing, as it is a thing that cannot be done decently without learning. Those, therefore, who neglect to learn to sing live in sin, as they neglect what is necessary to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship" [*President Edwards*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1. *Harp, &c.* History reminds us that great religious reformations have been associated with revived interest "in the service of song in the house of the Lord." Owing to worldliness in the Jewish Church, the beautiful musical service of the Temple declined; but at the revival in the reign of Hezekiah, "the kings and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David and Asaph the seer." Concerning the great American revival in his day, President Edwards writes: "Our public praises were greatly enlivened. In our psalmody God was served in the beauty of holiness. There has been no part of divine worship in which good men have had grace so drawn forth and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God as in singing his

praise. The people sang with unusual elevation of heart and voice" [*J. S. Pearsall*].

Ver. 3. *To praise the Lord*. He praiseth God best that serveth and obeyeth him most; the life of thankfulness consists in the thankfulness of life [*Burkitt*].

Ver. 7. *Number*. "Nothing promoted the Reformation more," says Bp. Jewel, "than inviting the common people to sing psalms, and that sometimes there would be six thousand persons at St. Paul's Cross singing together, which was very grievous to the Papists."

"From every place below the skies,
The grateful song, the fervent prayer,
The incense of the heart may rise
To heaven, and find acceptance there."
[*J. Pierpont*].

CHAPTER XXVI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The courses of the porters (vers. 1-12); lots cast for gate-keepers (vers. 13-19); keepers of treasures (vers. 20-28); the officers and the judges (vers. 29-32).

Vers. 1-12.—*Divisions of the porters.* On the importance of the office *cf.* chap. ix. 17-27; xxiii. 5. There were 4,000 (chap. xxiii. 6), all from the families of Kohathites and Merarites (ver. 14), divided into twenty-four courses, as the priests and musicians. *Mesh* Seven sons of whom mentioned (ver. 2); eighteen given in ver. 9, which includes relatives. Another name given (ver. 14); probably alluded to in chap. ix. 19. *Asaph.* Not of preceding chap. A Gershonite, probably the same as Ab. in Ex. vi. 24; and Ebi. 1 Chr. vi. 37, an actual son of Korah. Ver. 4. *Obed,* a porter for time of fixing of ark in Jer. xv. 24; xvi. 33. *Bessed* (*cf.* chap. xxv. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 11, 12). Ver. 6. *Mighty.* Ver. 7. *Strong.* The office of porters required physical strength to open and close ponderous gates, act as guard against theft and insurrection. Ver. 12. *Chief men,* overseers of the watch. Translate "to these divisions of the porters, principal men (use assigned) the watches, together with their brethren, for service in the house of the Lord," *i.e.*, the "chief men," enumerated in vers. 1-11, and amounting to no more than ninety-three, kept the watch and ward of the house, together with a further number of their brethren (4,000 are mentioned in chap. xxiii. 5), who assisted them from time to time [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 13-19.—*Arrangements of porters.* Lots, by which duties assigned to them as to the other Levites, and names of chiefs or captains given, with respective gates allotted to them. Ver. 15. *Assupim,* literally the house of collections (*cf.* Neh. xii. 25); probably a storehouse for grain, wine, and offerings for sustenance of priests. Ver. 16. *Shai,* literally "the gate of projection," the gate, *i.e.*, through which were "thrown out" the sweepings of the temple, the ashes, the offal of the victims, and the like [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 16. *Against ward.* Watch opposite to watch. Hosah had two watches, western and the gate Shallecheth, hence kept one watch over against the other. Ver. 17. *Six,* because eastward gate most frequented. Ver. 18. *Parbar* must designate the space between the western wall of the temple building and the wall of the court, which would be a sort of "precinct" or "purlieu" of the temple. Here were two gates, at one of which two guards were stationed: while at the other, called Shallecheth, which gave upon the causeway, there were four. It is noticeable that in this whole account the Temple is spoken of as if it were existing, when it was not as yet built. We must suppose that David formed the whole plan of the Temple, and fixed the stations and numbers of the porters, though it was left for Solomon to carry his instructions out [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 20-28.—*Levites in charge of treasures.* *Alujah,* doubtful reading. The Scriptures give *Aheyhem,* "their brethren," which is preferable, especially as there is no other mention of this A. [*Speak. Com.*]. *Treasures,* gifts and payments (Ex. xxx. 12; Num. xviii. 16). *Laad* (chap. vi. 17). *Jehi.* (ver. 22), the Jehielite. Jehiel gives name to the family, which accordingly includes his two brothers (xxiii. 8). Two of this family were the grand treasurers, under whom many of the Gershonites may have been employed [*cf. Murphy*]. Ver. 23. *Of or for* the four houses of Kohathites, a kind of preface to rest of the chapter. *Ruler* (ver. 24), chief custodian. Ver. 26. *Dedicated,* for service. Ver. 28. *Hand,* in the care of Shel.

Vers. 29-32.—*The officers and judges.* *Officers,* scribes or secretaries; magistrates who, attended by their clerks, exercised judicial functions. *Outward,* the people's private and public affairs, contrasted with functions of sacred worship. "There were 6,000 (chap. ii. 3-4) of them, who probably acted like their brethren on the principle of rotation, and these were divided into three classes—one (ver. 29) for the outward business over Israel; one (ver. 30), consisting of 1,700, for the rest of Jordan, 'in all the business and in the service of the king'; and the third (vers. 31, 32), consisting of 2,700, were rulers 'for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king'" [*Samieson*], *i.e.*, superintended religious matters and the interests of the king.

HOMILETICS.

PORTERS AT THE DOORS.—Verses 1-19.

Porters not like burden-bearers of modern times, but gate-keepers with special duties and responsibilities (Latin *portarius*, the man who attends the

porta). **I. Their special qualifications.** An office of considerable dignity, and only conferred upon men of first rank. More desirable than a courtier's position in a worldly palace. "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, &c." (Ps. lxxxiv. 10). 1. *Physical strength.* "Strong men" (ver. 7); "able men" (ver. 8). To open and shut heavy gates, ward off attacks, and quell insurrection, to exclude intruders and unclean, and to guard against thieves and robbers. In some respects the office military. They were the *soldiers* of Jehovah and *guards* of the temple. 2. *Patient in spirit.* To direct the worshippers, to instruct, to encourage the timid, and continue watch night and day (Deut. x. 10; Lev. viii. 35; Ps. cxxxiv. 2). "A man called 'The Man of the Mountain of the House' went round every night to see that all were in their places, and that none of them slept. If he found any one asleep he struck him, and had liberty to burn his clothes. To this Lightfoot thinks there is a reference in Rev. xv. 16: 'Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments.'" 3. *Fixed in number.* No less than 4,000 mentioned, a given number at each door, relieved by others at a certain time. How the number of porters were distributed under 25 chiefs or the 93 captains not informed. **II. Their peculiar mode of appointment.** "They cast lots" as usual. The lot for sacred purposes sanctioned by divine authority (Lev. xvi. 8; Num. xxvi. 55; 1 Sam. xiv. 41; Prov. xvi. 33), and continued until the time of our Lord (Luke i. 9). Among the heathen often used in choice of a champion or priority in combat; in the decision of fate in war; and in the appointment of magistrates, jurymen, and other functionaries. It appears to be a solemn appeal to an omniscient God, and teaches that things apparently accidental are under his control. "What is chance to man, is the appointment of God," says one. "He hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line."

THE BLESSING OF OBEDEDOM.—*Verse 5.*

"God blessed him," a short, suggestive phrase connecting past history with present condition, and giving an insight into Obbedom's history and God's providence. Learn—I. **That God will honour signal service.** Everything in *material* creation is made to serve; no insect, element, or atom created for itself. Man is made to serve. Wealth, social elevation, and privilege put him under greater obligation. Our aim should be to do our duty, that God may lead us to higher and nobler work. Caleb, Phineas, and Obbedom distinguished for service and honour. 1. *Honour is given naturally for service.* In war, commerce, and legislation, men are promoted, knighted, and made peers of the realm. "Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof (by natural law, through diligent cultivation); so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured" (Prov. xxvii. 18). 2. *Honour is given providentially.* "He that waiteth faithfully on his *Divine* master shall be honoured." Joseph, Nehemiah, and Daniel "stood before kings and not mean men." "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;" honour with his friendship and presence on earth, and at length approved before an assembled universe, "Well done, good and faithful servant." **II. That signal service thus rewarded is commended to our notice.** "Honourable mention" often found in Scripture. 1. *That we may discern the goodness of God.* The smallest service, even a cup of cold water, not overlooked. He is gracious, accepts and crowns our service for him. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." 2. *That we may imitate the example.* We may not be in the same circumstances and able to do the same things, but we may cherish the same spirit and copy their example. "Nobleness of condition," says Dr. Chalmers, "is not essential as a school for

nobleness of character. It is delightful to think that humble life may be just as rich in moral grace and moral grandeur as the loftiest places in society; that as true dignity of principle may be earned by him who in homeliest drudgery plies his conscientious task, as by him who stands entrusted with the fortunes of an empire."

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'Tis only noble to be good;
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood" [Tennyson].

GUARDS OF THE STORES TYPES OF CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.—Verses 20–28.

Temple watch a warfare. Two grand keepers of stores—one to maintain officers and services, the other for things consecrated to the building, "in the house of God." Many assisted, as a kind of brotherhood, in the use and defence of treasures. This service a type of Christian warfare. I. *In the acquisition of the treasure.* Much of it "spoils won in battles," taken from the enemy, therefore gained by courage, strength, and conflict. The treasures of Christian experience, the privileges of the Christian Church, and the advance of Christian missions only acquired through conflict. II. *In the defence of the treasure.* Religion in the soul, God's kingdom in the world must be kept or maintained by fighting. Warfare is constant, enemies attack, temptations surround. The battle not yet over, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." III. *In the use of the treasure.* Ancient trophies were hung up in heathen temples. Plunder was divided, and priests had influence to procure the gods certain offerings and acceptable presents. Our "spoils" gained through God, and must be dedicated to him. Samuel, Saul, Abner, and Joab had collected treasures which David now consecrated to the highest purpose, "to maintain the house of the Lord." Our gold and silver, time and strength, trophies gained over sin, Satan, and the world, all laid at the Saviour's feet. Abraham gave Melchisedec the spoils, and the victorious officers presented their "oblation to the Lord" (Num. xxxi. 50).

THE OFFICERS AND JUDGES.—Verses 29–32.

Three separate lists presented doorkeepers, treasure-keepers, and rulers of civil affairs, or "outward business over Israel." Doorkeepers were Korahites and Merarites, to whom belonged Obedom and his descendants. The treasures of God's house under the charge of Gershonite branches; the dedicated things under a branch of Kohathites. The service "of scribes and judges" was committed to the Izarites, along with Chenaniah (ver. 29). Notice—**I. The character of their office.** There are two departments. 1. *The judges administered the law.* Singers, porters, and Levites employed in the service of the sanctuary were not concerned in this business. One department enough to fill and understand. Pray not for enlargement of your sphere, but for ability to fill it. 2. *The officers collected the revenue.* Managed "God's tithes and the king's taxes." Thus city and country, Jehovah and the king were cared for. idolatry and injustice avoided, civil and sacred interests interwoven and advanced. **II. The period in which they held office.** "In the fortieth year of the reign of David" (ver. 31), the last year of his reign. He felt the end approaching, and arranged the orders of the sanctuary. We should diligently improve our time, and if we do not reap the fruit of our labours, let us not grudge it to our successors.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 5. *Blessing of Obed.* I. *What it consists of.* 1. Family increase. A large family of eight sons, descendants of whom he might be proud. 2. Family honour. His sons exalted to places of trust in the sanctuary. A great blessing to have children eminent in the service of God. 3. Family reputation. Held in great repute for conduct and character. "The memory of the just is blessed." II. *How it is gained.* Not by wealth and worldly influence. 1. By a right mind. Obed. was willing, very ready to take the ark when all others were afraid. When the heart is right before God, we shall be eager to render any help. 2. By right action. This springs from genuine affection. The mind has its own thoughts and actings. These anterior to all outward acts. Hence the saying, "Think before you act." "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he."

Ver. 10. *A father's favourite.* Simri made *chief*, not by right of primogeniture, but in office. If the *firstborn*, that is, the issue of the firstborn had failed: we learn "the vicissitudes of families," the uncertain tenure of earthly fame and fortune. But very likely he was better qualified for office than his elder brother. His father saw in him eminent qualifications. What differences in the same family! How anxious parents are to possess and promote clever children!

Ver. 14. *A wise counsellor.* Lit. a giver of counsel with wisdom—a high commendation. Many have counsel, but no wisdom. Many give counsel, but not wisely. Zechariah, a wise man, equal to his father and held a chief place. 1. The service of God requires wise men. 2. God in his providence raises up wise men. Hence, 3. This service is wisely and efficiently carried on in all ages.

Vers. 20–28. *Ministers stewards in God's house.* "Allowed to be put in

trust." Hence responsibility and honour; requiring piety, administrative ability, and faithfulness. "*Stewards of the mysteries of God.*" Not depositaries, nor owners, but dispensers ("rightly dividing" or dispensing) the word to others. "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2). *The treasury of God's house.* 1. Its origin. As far back as the time of Samuel its foundations laid (ver. 28); such had been once established under Joshua (vi. 24); but soon exhausted and not heard of under later judges until Samuel. 2. Its object. "To maintain the house of the Lord" (ver. 27) in its services and its officials. The Heb. means to *strengthen*, not the outward building merely, but to help its servants, encourage its efforts, and build up its worshippers. 3. The necessity of its replenishment. The more God gives to us the more we should devote to him. Great success in business, great "spoils" in war, call for proportionate returns. Church revenues ever needed. "The Lord's position" should never be forgotten.

Vers. 29–32. *The two spheres of Christian service.* 1. They are distinguished from one another. Civil and religious affairs, Church and State not opposed to one another, but entirely distinct. One concerns earthly, and the other heavenly affairs in nature and purpose. "My kingdom is not of this world." 2. They are intimately related one to another. The Church may help and intone the State, but the State should never control nor oppose the Church. "It would certainly be ruinous to true religion," says A. Clarke, "to make the State dependent on the Church; nor should the Church be dependent on the State. Let them mutually support each other; and let the State rule by the *laws*, and the Church live by the *Bible*."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXVI.

Vers. 1-19. *Porters*. Five things are requisite to a good officer—ability, clean hands, despatch, patience, and impartiality [*W. Penn.*]. *Divisions*. One man perhaps proves miserable in the study of the law, who might have flourished in that of physic or divinity; another runs his head against the pulpit, who might have been serviceable to his country at the plough; and the third proves a very dull and heavy philosopher, who possibly would have made a good mechanic, and have done well enough at the useful philosophy of the spade or anvil [*South*].

Ver. 27. *Spoils*. There was a dispute in the army of Mohammed between young men who had fought and old who had stayed under the ensigns. Mohammed pretended to have received orders from heaven to divide the booty. This the origin of ch. viii. in *The Koran*, "entitled the Spoils, revealed

at Medina," beginning thus, "They will ask thee concerning the spoils. Answer, The division of the spoils belongeth unto God and the apostle" [*cf. Ed. by Geo. Sale*]. It was customary among the Romans, when entering upon war, to promise some part of their prey to their *deities*. There was a temple at Rome dedicated to *Jupiter Præator*, because a part of the prey was due to him [*cf. A. Clarke in loco*].

Ver. 29. *Officers*. The curious fact comes out in all the arrangements that office was hereditary. The heads of the different departments are named after the heads of the families employed in them. All that David seems to have done was to restore and regulate a system that had been organised at the first settlement of the nation. In this respect it presents a striking contrast to our modern customs [*Murphy*].

CHAPTER XXVII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] We have captains of monthly divisions of the army (vers. 1-15), princes of tribes (vers. 16-24), stewards of treasures and possessions of the king (vers. 25-29), and David's counsellors (vers. 30-34).

Vers. 1-15.—*Captains of divisions*. Arrangements for army similar to those for priests and Levites. Military force consisted of 12 companies of 24,000 each, a company serving a month at a time (2 Sam. xxiii. 8; 1 Chr. xi. 11). *Chief fathers*, princes of tribes and chief officers of state. *Captains*, subordinate to commanders of monthly divisions. *Officers*, scribes who performed duty of commissariat, and kept muster-roll in army. This verse heads the chapter. "It may be safely assumed that the heading originally referred to a more elaborate description of the classes and their different officers, for which we have here only a shorter extract" [*Keil*]. Ver. 2. *Jash.*, son of Hachmoni (ch. xi. 11; 2 Sam. xxiii. 8); *Zab.*, one of his ancestors, or these may be different names of the same person. Ver. 3. *Perez*, Pharez. Ver. 4. *Dod.*, read Eleazar, son of Dodo (ch. xi. 12; 2 Sam. xxiii. 9). Ver. 5. *Ben.* (2 Sam. xxiii. 20-23). *Chief priest*, i.e., chief prince. Abiathar chief priest, but Jehoiada head of Aaronite family. Ver. 7. *Asahel*, slain by Abner (2 Sam. ii. 18-23; xxiii. 24); his name given in honour of his memory. Ver. 8. *Shum.* (*cf.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 11; 1 Chr. xi. 27). Ver. 11. *Sibb.*, for different spelling see ch. xx. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 18. Ver. 15. *Oth.*, a descendant of the judge in succession to Joshua (Judg. iii. 9-11).

Vers. 16-24.—*Princes of the tribes*. This a civil institution, in contrast to the military ruler. "Rulers" or "princes" of the tribes appear to have been the eldest lineal descendants of the patriarchs, according to the law of primogeniture [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 18. *Elihu*, for "Eliab," eldest son of Jesse (1 Sam. xvi. 6). Ver. 21. *Abner*, Saul's general. Ver. 22. *These*, princes of most of the tribes, for "Gad and Asher omitted.

Similarly, Dan and Zebulon omitted from the genealogical survey of the tribes in chs. iv.-vii. We can only suppose that the lists, as they came down to the writer of Chronicles, were incomplete" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 23. *Took not*, but only those above twenty years, or of those that drew sword (1 Chr. xxi. 5). *Said*, therefore to number all above and under twenty years old would have been immense trouble and offensive to God. Ver. 24. *Finished not* (cf. 1 Chr. xxi. 6). *Chronicles*. The census was not completed; full details not reported to David by enumerators, and therefore not registered in public archives or daily records.

Vers. 25-31.—Stewards of royal possessions. *Treasures*, those in royal palace, private accumulations. *Storehouses*, scattered in country, for taxes paid *in kind*, not in money. *Castles*, watch-towers in border districts exposed to raids from plundering tribes in the desert (cf. 2 Chr. xxvi. 10; xxvii. 4). Ver. 31. *Substance*, consisting of money, fruits, labourers, flocks, and land. "David had become, by some means or other, a large landed proprietor, as well as a capitalist, possessed of much moveable wealth" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 32-34.—David's ministers. Compare in contents and style with its counterpart in 2 Sam. viii. 15-18; 1 Chr. xviii. 15-17; 2 Sam. xx. 23-26. "The list is chiefly supplemental, the officers mentioned being, in the main, such as have not been noticed before—*e.g.*, king's counsellor, king's friend, companion of the king's sons. The list cannot belong to a very late part of David's reign, since it contains the name of Ahithophel, who slew himself during Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. xvii. 23)" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 32. *Uncle*, David's "nephew," as word often used (cf. ch. xx. 7 and 2 Sam. xxi. 21). Ver. 33. *Ahith.*, only mention made by writer of Chronicles. *Companion*, "king's friend" (1 Ki. iv. 5). Ver. 34. *Jehoiada*, son of Ben., named probably after his grandfather.

HOMILETICS.

THE MILITARY FORCE OF DAVID.—Verses 1-15.

Here an account of the army, the militia, with its officers and regulations. The organisation in part inherited from Saul, but greatly developed by David.

I. The strength of its numbers. Twelve legions, each 24,000 men; divided into regiments of 1,000, and these again into companies of 100 men, under the command of their respective subalterns, there being 24 captains of thousands and 240 centurions. This a sufficient force for ordinary purposes of State; for putting down sudden attacks or popular tumults, and repelling invasion. "When extraordinary emergencies demanded a larger force, the whole standing army could easily be called to arms, amounting to 288,000 or 300,000 including the 12,000 officers that naturally attended on the twelve princes" (vers. 16-24). "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host (by the greatness of his warlike might). A mighty man (a warrior) is not delivered by much strength" (Ps. xxxiv. 16).

II. The limited period of its service. "Month by month." This monthly course would not be burdensome to the country nor royal exchequer; would be a training and discipline; and would permit every soldier to return to the pursuits and duties of private life for eleven months in the year. None compelled to serve, nor at expenses for more than a month, which could easily be borne. Every wise king will contribute for public safety, with as little expense as possible to the people. "The prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression."

III. The officers by which it was commanded. These termed "the chief fathers," the hereditary "heads of tribes, who, like chieftains of clans, possessed great power and influence."

1. *Men of great experience.* Not ignorant and unaccustomed to warfare. They are mentioned among David's worthies in 2 Sam. xxiii. and 1 Chr. xi. "At the head of his army were officers of consummate experience, and what was more highly esteemed in the warfare of the time, extraordinary personal activity, strength, and valour. His heroes remind us of those of Arthur or Charlemagne, excepting that the *armour* of the feudal chieftains constituted their superiority; here main strength of body and dauntless fortitude of mind" [*Hist. of Jews,* Milman].

2. *Men promoted by merit.* Tried and distinguished

by great actions, then advanced to great preferments. Favoritism had no influence. Each appointed to office for which best qualified. Men of worth thus encouraged, and public efficiency promoted. "Many seek the ruler's favour" in social servility; to whom a smile from superiors is like a sunbeam. But princes find it good policy to promote men of truth and incorruptible honesty rather than sycophants and time-servers. "The king's favour is towards a wise servant." The great King will finally promote "the faithful and wise servant" who has improved his talents, been diligent in his work, and is ready for his account.

THE CIVIL OFFICERS OF DAVID.—*Verses 16-22.*

Here a list of hereditary chiefs or rulers of tribes—tribal princes—at the time of David's census. Gad and Ashar for some reason excluded. Take the record—**I. As illustrating the optimist style of the writer.** David pictured in his struggles, elevation, and grandeur. His wars and conquests, the extension of his kingdom, and the list of his officers. Arrangements sacred and civil, and the use of symbolic numbers illustrate the same tendency. A preference for brilliant scenes. Parts omitted chiefly dark. "Such as would disturb and in some points obscure the lustre of the picture. He collects all that is fitted to represent the hero-king in his greatness, and the activity of his reign as an uninterrupted chain of splendid theocratic events. To finish a picture that presents David in the meridian height of his glory and mighty achievements is the obvious aim of all that our author adds in the way of supplement on the ground of his resources to the life-picture of the great king as given in the Books of Samuel" [*Lange*]. **II. As upholding ancient institutions.** Moses gave to every tribe its chief. Many references to the Pentateuch, Levitical rites, and prescriptions of the law. A few changes are made to meet the exigencies of the time; but constant regard is paid to "the command of the Lord God of Israel" in ancient days. Institutions educational and industrial, social and religious, have a wonderful energy, re-duplicate human strength, embody and perpetuate the acquisitions of society in sacred forms. There is much to conserve as well as create. The spirit of reverence must ever be joined with the spirit of invention; the old and the new must be inseparably linked together in the work of the legislator and social reformer. "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

THE RESTRAINTS OF GOD ON THE WILL OF MAN.—*Verses 23, 24.*

God restrained David from completing the census, and often controls men's actions for the accomplishment of his will. His sway most absolute and indisputable. He could not fulfil his designs without this. But no interference with human volition and responsibility. Divine restraint over the human will difficult to understand, but involves no absurdity. How does God restrain man's will? **I. By revealing his own will.** "The Lord had said, &c." We are apt to do what we think is right; hence need for a clear, distinct revelation from God. This is given. 1. *God's will should be our law.* It is best, the safest and only guide. 2. *To disobey his law is rebellion.* David knew God had promised that his people should be innumerable, yet was determined to number them, though regarding the custom not to include those under twenty. A full and unmistakable revelation of duty should induce to its performance and check, as intended, in disobedience. **II. By restraining man's will.** David, unchecked by Joab, determined to carry out his own wish and make arrangements for political and military purposes. God restrained him and kept him

in bounds. 1. *By inward conviction of wrong-doing.* "I have sinned." Wounded to the quick, as if struck by an arrow. Conscience roused, accused, and checked. We cannot fly in the face of God without moral rebuke and self-accusation. 2. *By outward restraints.* When Joab's reluctance and natural delay produced no impression, God sent the plague. This answered the end. Thus God controls the human heart. (Abimelech, Pharaoh, and Babylonish monarchs.) "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, &c."

DAVID'S POSSESSIONS.—Verses 25-31.

I. What they consisted of. "The king's treasures," royal possessions in palace, and stores in other places. 1. Treasures, gold, silver, &c., in Jerusalem. 2. Goods in the provinces, grain and stores in castles, cities, villages, and in the fields (ver. 25). 3. Cultivators of the ground (ver. 26). 4. Vineyards and their produce (ver. 27). 5. Olive-trees and their produce, and sycamore plantations (ver. 28). 6. Flocks and herds in different districts. 7. Camels and asses (ver. 30). As younger son, David had not much private property (1 Sam. xvi. 11-20). Now a large landed proprietor, and a capitalist owning moveable wealth. **II. How they were gained.** By successful wars. During Saul's lifetime he had made raids and gained wealth (1 Sam. xxvii. 8, 9; xxx. 20). He received much spoil, and acquired newly conquered countries (2 Sam. viii. 4). "His olive grounds and sycamore plantations were in the 'low plain,' which was the country of the Philistines (ver. 28); camels and flocks were pastured by Arabs (vers. 30, 31); probably on lands formerly belonging to Arabs. No doubt he derived considerable revenue from subject kings (1 Sam. viii. 2; x. 19), as Solomon did (1 Kings iv. 21), and he may have bought or rented lands in different places. There may possibly have been a certain quantity of public unassigned land in Palestine at the time when he became king, which would naturally fall into his hands to be dealt with as he chose. Further, he enjoyed, of course, the usual rights of a Jewish king over the landed property of his subjects, and was thus entitled to receive a tithe of the produce (1 Sam. viii. 15-17). He would also from time to time obtain those 'benevolences' which were expected from all on certain occasions" [*Speak. Com.*]. **III. How they were guarded.** "All these were rulers of the substance" (ver. 31). The king divided his private possessions into twelve departments, like his public affairs. In these departments were choice men, able to manage and guard his treasure. No officers for state and display, none for sport, but all for service. Men loyal and obedient, in whom the king could put confidence. "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule."

THE MINISTERS OF DAVID'S COURT.—Verses 32-34.

In this list David's counsellors, seven men of high position, worthy apparently of special mention. Four or five known in other capacity (*cf.* lists ch. xviii. 14-17; 2 Sam. viii. 16-18; xx. 23-26). 1. *The counsellors of the king.* First *Jonathan*, kinsman of David, a politician, scribe, and eminent for wisdom. Then *Ahithophel*, cunning; held in great estimation, and generally followed in counsel. After death of Ahith., *Jehoiada* and *Abiathar* succeeded in the privy council. 2. *The companion of the king.* "Hushai was the king's companion," the friend whom he entrusted with secrets, and whose conversation was acceptable (2 Sam. xvi. 37). H. an opponent of Ahithophel, but honest and faithful. 3. *The tutor of the king's sons.* *Jehiel*, the Hachmonite, filled this position; an office mentioned only here. 4. *The commander-in-chief to the king.* *Joab*, as generalissimo,

would be in some sense minister of war, and belong to rank of counsellor. As such he appears to act in taking the census of the people (ch. xxi.). Such men eminent for wisdom and integrity, most honourable and trusty advisers, but David preferred his Bible above all, says one. "Thy testimonies also are my delight and *my counsellors*" (men of counsel) (Ps. cxix. 24). A privilege to be counsellor to such a king; but Jehovah has friends whom he admits to his audience. "The secret (privy council met for deliberation) of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (Ps. xxv. 14).

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-22. 1. *David as a powerful prince, a type of Christ.* Thousands trained as regular militia for his service. His kingdom well defended, and secure against all assault. Christ's kingdom and Church well guarded—never wants champions; legions of angels at his command. 2. *David's soldiers a type of Christ's subjects.* They are bound to fight, should never desert, and will be sure to win if faithful.

Vers. 23, 24. "The Lord said he would increase Israel." *The wonderful promise.* 1. Embodied in the tradition of the nation. 2. The ground of hope for the people. 3. Fulfilled by the providence of God. Or, *An innumerable people* (cf. Gen. xv. 5; xxii. 17; xxvi. 4). 1. In actual existence. 2. In future calculations. The actual number of the people living at a given time is not the sum of the Lord's people. In the Divine estimate those gone before and those coming after are taken into account. Can we count the stars?

then may we number God's children! They are perpetually increasing!

Ver. 27. *A remembered name.* *Asahel*, captain of the fourth course, died early in David's reign (2 Sam. ii. 12-23). But greatly respected, and gave name to family or regiment. *The value of a good name.* A good reputation inseparable from man, outlasts every worldly blessing. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

Ver. 33. *The King's companion.* Heb., friend or companion. A great privilege and distinction. "Hushai's is not obscurely indicated in the questions which Absalom addressed to him, "Is this thy kindness to *thy friend*?" Why wentest thou not with *thy friend*?" (2 Sam. xvi. 17). On his devotion to David, see 2 Sam. xv. 32-37; xvii. 5-16" [*Speak. Com.*]. Abraham "a friend of God." "Ye are *my friends*," says Christ, "if ye do what I command you."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXVII.

Vers. 1-15. *Captains.* An English captain in the year 1759, who was beating up for recruits in the vicinity of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, met one day a Moravian Indian, and asked him whether he had a mind to be a soldier. "No," answered he, "I am already engaged." "Who is your captain?" asked the officer. "I have a very brave and excellent captain," replied the Indian. "His name is Jesus Christ. Him will I serve as long as I live. My life is at his disposal." Reproved

by the Indian's answer, the officer left him unmolested [*Baxendale*].

Vers. 25-29. *Our treasures.* If every man works at that which nature fitted him for, the cows (ver. 26) will be well attended [*La Fontaine*]. Not what I have, but what I do, is my kingdom [*Carlyle*].

Vers. 32-34. *Counsellor.* The best friends are those who stimulate us to that which is good (Heb. x. 24) [*Nicholls*]. Every friend is to the other a sun and a sunflower also; he

attracts and follows [*Richter*]. "A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure" (Eccles. vi. 14). "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by *heartly counsel*" (Prov. xxvii. 9).

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter and following comprise last words of David, special directions to Solomon in building the temple and succeeding to the throne.

Vers. 1-4.—*The assembly of princes.* All various officials, of whom account formerly given; really the whole court. *Princes*, the term one under which all persons of importance might be included not comprised in any other of the six classes [*Speak. Com.*]. *Ver. 2. Stood.* An effort in his age and weakness. *Brethren*, modest and affectionate. *House of rest.* Contrast with movable tabernacle. *Ready.* Gathered materials. *Ver. 3. War* (2 Sam. vii. 5-13; 1 Kings v. 5). *Ver. 4. Judah* (Gen. xlix. 8-10). *Like me* (cf. 1 Sam. xvi.).

Vers. 5-8.—*Solomon declared successor.* Succession indefinite at first through Nathan, then a distinct revelation that Solomon was chosen. *Ver. 6. Courts*—*i.e.*, temple courts (2 Chron. iv. 9). *Constant* (1 Kings iii. 14; ix. 4). *Ver. 8. Now.* Appeal to congregation first, then to Solomon in their presence. *Keep and seek.* Exhortation similar to that of Moses (Deut. xxx. 15-20).

Vers. 9, 10.—*Charge to Solomon.* *Know*, experimentally. *Search.* Least failure observed (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 1-3). *Seek him* (cf. Ps. ix. 10). *Strong* (ch. xxii. 13; cf. Ps. xxvii. 14; Ps. xxxi. 24). *Ver. 10.* Special duty urged.

Vers. 11-21.—*The plan of the temple.* *Pattern*, working plan, as Ex. xxv. 10. Set of directions in writing. *Porch* before the sanctuary (2 Chron. iii. 4). *Houses.* Holy and most holy places. *Treas.* Chambers built round the wall (1 Kings vi. 5). *Upper chambers.* Over most holy place (2 Chron. iii. 9). *Inner parlours.* Lower rooms of side buildings of holy place, and perhaps also of porch. *Ver. 12. By the spirit.* Literally the pattern of all that was with him in the spirit or the form of all that floated before his mind. David's spirit, not God's spirit spoken of [*Speak. Com.*]. *Ver. 13. Courses.* Explained chaps. xxiii.-xxv. *Ver. 14. Weight.* Fixing proportionate weights in things of gold. *Candlesticks* in temple were ten (2 Chron. iv. 7); silver ones for uses not specified. *Tables.* Ten connected with shewbread (1 Kings vii. 48); silver tables for minor purposes. *Bowls* for sprinkling (2 Chron. iv. 11). *Cups* for libations (Ex. xxv. 29). *Basons*, covered vessels, tankards. *Chariot.* Two cherubs on mercy-seat constituted the chariot on which Jehovah rides (cf. Ps. xviii. 10; xcix. 1). *Ver. 19. Hand.* Pattern given by one of the prophets in writing; or by divine revelation, for which hand of Jehovah is equivalent (2 Chron. xxxix. 15). *Vers. 20, 21.* Resume address broken off in *ver. 10.* For former part, cf. chap. xxii. 13. *Command.* Literally, for all thy words.

HOMILETICS.

DAVID'S ADDRESS TO THE PRINCES.—*Verses 1-8.*

An assembly convened, consisting of princes of tribes, captains, and subordinate officers of the army, stewards of the royal household, and nobles of the land. The *nation* represented. The occasion solemn and important. David the centre and chief actor of the scene, about to abdicate in a different way from Charles V., before his grand audience, after a life spent in military pursuits and ambitious projects. The scene portrayed worth attention. Notice—**I. The attitude which David assumed.** "The king stood up upon his feet." Probably had been sitting before; very likely recovered from sickness mentioned

(1 Kings i. 1). He receives strength in age and infirmity to stand up to improve the opportunity, and to inspire his audience with his own earnestness and enthusiasm. A reverent, dignified attitude that he felt due to the occasion, indicative of the influence of a great thought over the mind of man, and the power of that influence even in old age to rouse to duty. "Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am grey-headed, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to all them that are yet for to come" (Ps. lxxi. 16). **II. The spirit which David manifested.** "My brethren and my people." 1. *A humble spirit.* "My people" whom I rule, with whom I rank myself in this great work. He is their superior, but does not forget the command "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren." 2. *An affectionate spirit.* "My brethren" whom I love, not *servants* whom I command. Affection and condescension to inferiors becoming in monarchs. Not less honoured, but more beloved. "Love levels all," said Cervantes. 3. *A spirit of authority.* "Hear me." The king's circumstances, history, and experience gave weight to his authority. His message solemn, required attention, and must be obeyed, if the nation prospered. "Where the word of a king is there is power." Court and people are bound in faithfulness to their sovereign, and to the interests of their country. Hence "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing" (Ecc. viii. 4, 5). **III. The ambition which David cherished.** "I had it in mine heart to build, &c." (ver. 2). His cherished resolve not to be great, to build a family and extend a kingdom, &c., but "to build an house" for God, a purpose which filled his heart, occupied his time, and to accomplish which he gave his gold and gathered his materials. A noble purpose of immense value in life in giving strength and direction. To have one great aim, constantly present and made the habit of mind, to make every thought and every pursuit to centre upon this aim, will secure the happiness and improvement of life. **IV. The confession which David makes.** God denied him the pleasure of building. In his heart, not executed by his hand, "because thou hast been a man of war," a confession candid and unreserved. Many things veiled in forgetfulness, passed by in silence, and never made prominent and public. This a warning to all, that sins stain character, hinder from noblest work, and give unsuitableness to its accomplishment. "The Lord hath purposed; who shall disannul it?"

"A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents" [*Shaks.*].

THE TESTIMONY OF A NOBLE LIFE.—*Verses 4-6.*

David here reviews his life, and at its close testifies to the goodness and grace of God. **I. In his choice to the throne God displays his sovereignty.** The different steps mentioned. The tribe of Judah, then his father's house, and among the sons of his father he alone chosen. Tribe, family, individual. The choice not according to man's judgment. One after another set aside. "The Lord hath not chosen *these*;" right one found at length. "*This* is he." **II. In his acquisition of the kingdom God manifests his providence.** "To be king over Israel for ever." Trained in shepherd life under a sense of duty, dependence upon God and self-control, disciplined by Divine providence to wait and prepare for the throne, gifted by God's grace with special characteristics of prudence, wisdom, generosity, and courage, he was elevated to be king. The recollection of this sudden exaltation from humble station deeply impressed him through life. His last words a declaration of God's providence and mercy. **III. In his son's succession to the throne God fulfils his promise.** "He said unto me, Solomon, thy son shall build, &c." God seen through his own life down to succession of

his son—who should build the temple, be established on the throne, and be taken into special covenant with God (*cf.* 2 Sam. vii. 12-16). Blessings entailed upon family and posterity—"the promise to you and your children." What we do, or sincerely design to do for God, though prevented, we shall in no wise lose reward. Satisfaction to parents while they live, to have signs and assurance through Divine promise of family piety and prosperity when they are dead.

THE CHOICE OF SOLOMON.—*Verses 5-8.*

David addressing the assembly traces his election to the sovereignty of God. Solomon presented in the same set speech as successor; chosen on the same principle as himself, therefore worthy of reception and obedience. Notice—I. **The method by which Solomon came to reign.** "He hath chosen Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom." Divine selection all through history of father and son. Human events to David not fortuitous occurrences, but Divine acts. Hence design, goodness, power, and providence in individual life. II. **The conditions on which his government will be established.** Not by his policy, armies, and fleets; but by loyal obedience to God. This the rule for nations, leaders, and king. God purposes and arranges not in disregard to our response to his commands. 1. *The constant obedience of the sovereign.* "I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments." The security and perpetuity of Solomon's reign depended upon this condition. 2. *The intelligent obedience of the people.* "Keep and seek for all the commandments" (ver. 8). *Seek*, inquire to know; then *keep*, practise what you know; *all* commandments. Obedience intelligent, obedience impartial, and obedience uniform, the triple conditions of temporal prosperity, of real *establishment* of families and nations—the only way to enjoy our inheritance and to transmit it safely to our successors. "That ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *David assembled.* 1. In a critical time of national history—the king's departure, and choice of successor. 2. To hear parting counsel of the dying monarch. Advice to Solomon, princes, and all; advice concerning present and future.

Vers. 5-8. *Solomon, my son.* Scarce any of the Roman emperors had a son to succeed him; all, or most of them, till Constantine, died unnatural deaths [*Trapp*]. *Shall build* a material temple; Christ, a mystical, that is the Church, which is the house of God (1 Tim. iii. 15). For this and the following promises are, some peculiar to Solomon, some to Christ, and some to both as the types and antitypes [*Ibid.*]. *I will be his father* (ver. 6). Solomon's by adoption and regeneration. See 2 Cor. vi. 18. Christ's, by eternal generation and personal union. God

saith the same to all Christian princes, but then they must make it their case to build him a spiritual temple [*Ibid.*]. *Be constant* (ver. 7). Hebrew, strong; for he will be hard put to it. God's promises are conditional. See 2 Sam. vii. *As at this day.* Solomon had been well instructed in the ways of God, both by father (Prov. iv. 4) and mother (Prov. xxxi. 1), and while young he did God's commandments and judgments, as hinted in these words, but he was not so constant. Ver. 8. *Keep and seek.* Keep what you know already, and seek to be yet further instructed. By this latter word "seek" *tollit ignorantiam illam crassam*, saith Vatablus, he striketh at affected ignorance [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 8, grounded on this promise is a double charge; first, to the people, and then to Solomon. Keep-

ing and seeking the commandments of the Lord, is at once *the test and the security* of his people [*Murphy*].

A religious training. I. *Given with great affection.* Many sons, Solomon chosen, &c. (ver. 5). II. *Practical in its tendency.* "Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord." A training that deadens; this quickening

intellectually and morally. III. *Solemn in its sanctions.* "In the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God."

IV. *Benevolent in its design.* To be established in our position, and to preserve and hand down our trust to others. "That ye may possess this good land, &c."

HOMILETICS.

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.—Verses 9, 10, and 20, 21.

Very touching and important is this charge; everything to give solemnity and perpetual interest to the scene. Solomon urged to—**I. A personal acquaintance with God.** "Know thou the God of thy father"—not theoretic knowledge, Solomon plenty of that; but practical and experimental. David concerned that his son should be religious; not great, popular, and wise. Knowledge of God the foundation of all religion and usefulness. This knowledge includes—1. *An intelligent view of his nature.* Impossible to know God perfectly, but belief in his existence, holiness, omniscience, and truth. The science of God, the central, the vital science—that which gives life, unity, and beauty to every branch of knowledge. 2. *This knowledge obtained by obedience.* Loving and serving God the way to know him. "If any man will do his will, he shall know."

II. A practical regard to God's service. Knowledge that is *life* first, and then service. Much excitement, effort, and service without personal acquaintance with God. 1. *A willing service.* "With a willing mind." The hand may act without the will. Service mechanical, drudgery, unless willingly given. God requires consent—does not force nor constrain. Taskmasters force (Pharaoh). God's service free and voluntary. "Who is willing to consecrate his service?" 2. *A steadfast service.* "Serve him with a perfect heart"—with an undivided mind; with the whole heart. Not "a double heart" (Heb., a heart and a heart), Ps. xii. 2. No duplicity nor deception; no wavering, halting between two opinions, nor compromise (Matt. vi. 24). "Ungodly professors have two hearts, two lords, two ends, two ways" (*Coccius*). "Come not unto the Lord with a double heart" (Eccles. i. 28).

III. The importance of the work bequeathed him to finish. "Thou art to build a house for the sanctuary." Solomon's whole life should be active and holy service. The temple special and inherited work. 1. *Undertake cautiously.* "Take heed now." Work difficult, requiring prudence and care. Solomon young and inexperienced, and possibly might meet with indifference, if not opposition. 2. *Finish it courageously.* "Be strong and do it." Do it without delay and reluctance. "Blessed is the man that findeth his work," says Carlyle. Many find, but neglect it. The blessedness in doing it. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

IV. The powerful inducements to the performance of this work. Solomon's circumstances most eventful and inspiring. Ever surrounded by influences and motives to performance of duty. 1. *He is chosen to the work.* "The Lord hath chosen thee to build." Not every man is a builder. Some gather materials, and others plan and lay the foundation. God chooses and qualifies his architects in Church and State. "I have raised him up . . . he shall build my city" (Isa. xlv. 13). 2. *The people are ready to co-operate with him in the work.* "The courses of the priests and the Levites shall be with thee" (verse 21). Advice and help—workmen "willing and skilful" of great

service. When none oppose, when "the princes and all the people are wholly at command," then work is likely to succeed, and we should be eager to carry it on. 3. *God will help him.* "The Lord God, even my God, will be with thee" (verse 20). God, who strengthens and prospers the father, will "not fail nor forsake the son." These motives fit to stir up, animate true-hearted workers, and admonish to action. Avoid *fear*; "fear not, nor be dismayed. Cherish *courage*;" be strong and of good courage. Begin thy work at once, "do it." "Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee."

"Do what thou dost, as if the earth were heaven,
And that thy last day were the judgment day:
When all's done, nothing's done" [*Kingsley*].

GOD'S RELATION TO HUMAN LIFE.—Verse 9.

This description of God introduced as an argument for sincerity of life. He sees, knows, our hearts and actions; therefore serve him perfectly, &c. Learn —**I. That our life is exposed to God's inspection.** "The Lord searcheth all hearts." This implies that all our department is open to God's inspection. Some imagine that God is too great to regard such a creature as man. But what he created is not beneath him to notice. To Him great and small are equal. He is cognisant of an atom as of a globe; of an insect as an angel. From Him nothing hid. "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering." "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." **II. That our service to God should spring from sincere motives.** "And understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." God's attention not limited to actions and words—his province and prerogative to read and understand "*imaginations*" (phantases, *imag'd* deeds) "of the thoughts." Hence no deceiving Him by falsehood and form. He desires "truth in the inward parts," as opposed to hypocrisy and self-deceit (Ps. li. 6). Hearts must be sincere and thoughts of God pure. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked" with heartless, outward service. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts," &c. **III. That our welfare depends upon our conduct towards God.** He is to be known and served. Our interest to obey. 1. *True service will be rewarded.* "If thou seek him he will be found of thee." The smallest service no trifle to God. David's desire to build well-pleasing to God. "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." The will accepted for the deed. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath." 2. *Opportunity neglected will be disastrous.* "If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." *Forsake*, after knowing, obeying, and working for him. *Cast off*, as worthless and lost. Solomon's interest, duty, and danger are put before him in true and impressive light by a pious and dying father. If youth give no heed to parental requests and heavenly calls, they forsake their highest interests: enter a path of folly, which leads to failure; to death without recovery; to a future without hope.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.—Verses 11–20.

Evidently David wished to make a solemn and formal business, in giving instructions and handing over the plans for the Temple with elevations, measurements, apartments, and chief articles of furniture. **I. The plan of the Temple.** "David gave to Solomon the pattern." 1. *Divine in its origin.* He claims the divine sanction and inspiration which Moses claimed for the tabernacle of old (Ex. xxv. 40). From porch at one end to sanctuary at the other, nothing left to arbitrary choice, to man's act and invention; all given by

inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Models given in Christian life and Christian character; the Spirit will help to carry them out and guide in every detail. 2. *Written in form.* "The Lord made me understand in writing" (ver. 19). Visions and dreams pass away. Written instructions abide; often consulted and meet our necessities. The word of God is "written for our instruction" in building up Christian life and the spiritual temple. But "*the hand*" must be upon us to make the word effectual and the work successful. **II. The materials of the Temple.** Gold and silver, "wrought stones and brass in abundance without weight." Gathered, as we have seen, from all quarters and in different times. David's work was difficult and thorough; lasting and worthy of imitation. He gave time and trouble, his substance, and his heart to accomplish it. **III. The furniture of the Temple.** Vessels of gold and silver, candlesticks and lamps, tables and altars, &c. The porch, the holy and most holy place to be appropriately furnished. In these directions David guided by Divine will, not by his own taste. God only knows what is fit for his own house. Put nothing into it that ought not to be there; take nothing out which ought to be there. "Look that thou make them after the pattern which was shewed thee in the mount."

DAVID'S ADDRESS TO SOLOMON.

Observe—1. It was an address of a dying father to a son. May all our children read it with a feeling heart! 2. It embraces the sum total of real religion. This has two distinct parts—(1) The first includes a knowledge of God: "Know thou the God of thy fathers." 1st. Know him as a sin-pardoning God (Jer. xxiv. 7). 2nd. Know him so as to be at peace with him (Job xxii. 21). 3rd. Know him so as to love and live to him. 4th. This true saving knowledge of God may be known by its peculiar properties. It is, first, experimental (Ps. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 3); second, soul-abasing (Job xlii. 5, 6; Ep. iii. 8); third, growing (Job i. 10; 2 Pet. iii. 18); fourth, pure (Jas. iii. 17; 1 Mi. iii. 6); fifth, practical (1 Mi. ii. 3; Mi. x. 4). (2) True piety includes the serving of God "with a perfect heart, a willing mind." 1st. God must be served; that is, worshipped and obeyed. 2nd. He must be served "with a perfect heart;" that is, with an entire and undivided heart; with a heart inflamed with love and burning with zeal for God's glory. 3rd. "With a willing mind;" that is, with alacrity, delight, and joy. (3) David urged this exhortation upon the attention of his son by a threefold consideration: 1. By the consideration that God is the searcher of hearts: "The Lord searcheth all hearts." The heathens had no such exalted ideas of any of their gods. 2. That he is the rewarder of piety: "If thou seek him," in the way he hath appointed, "he will be found of thee;" will make himself known to thee as thy Friend, and Father and God in covenant. 3. That he is the punisher of apostasy: "If thou forsake him," desert his love and service and turn from following him, "he will cast thee off;" will withdraw his gracious and powerful presence from thee, and change his countenance and course towards thee [*Rev. J. Wilson*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 9. *The God of thy father.* 1. The rich experience behind these words. 2. The force of parental affection in giving that experience. 3. The susceptibility of youth to profit by the teaching. Home instruction needed, may be repeated from one generation to another. Home influence never lost. "The fond attachment to the well-known place, Whence first we started into life's long race, Retains its hold with such unfailling sway, We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day" [*Cowper*].

If thou seek God, &c. 1. *The object of search.* God lost through sin; must be sought; worthy of seeking. His friendship and favour, the best of all blessings. 2. *The promise of success.* "He will be found of thee." This proved from Scripture and experience. A declaration of David's experience. 3. *The threatened displeasure.* "If thou forsake him, &c." This caution to guard and stimulate. Forsaking God to be alienated in thought and affection. The unregenerate turn their backs and wander like the prodigal. Unconverted world without God, in dark region of atheism. Those who remain in this state will be cast away. But "God," says one, "never cast man off until they first cast Him off."

Vers. 9, 10. *Fathers and Children.* In this earnest and affectionate charge we see one generation—1. Transmitting the knowledge of God to its successor. 2. Enjoining the service of God upon its successor. 3. Indicating God's method of dealing with its successor. 4. Bequeathing its unfulfilled intentions to its successor [*Mt. Braithwaite*].

Ver. 10. *For the sanctuary* or for sanctification—*i.e.*, where God may sanctify his people in holy ordinances,

and be sanctified by them in holy duties [*Trapp*].

Ver. 11. *Place of the mercy seat*, lit. the house of the mercy seat. Seat of mercy in Holy of Holies, Jesus Christ, the Christian Church and the human heart.

Ver. 14. *Gold by weight.* The vessels for the holy place were of gold, as those for the priests' court were of silver. Now, like as in the temple there were some vessels of gold, and some of silver, and all had their weight and their use; so in the Church of Christ there are diversity of vessels, and of gifts (2 Tim. ii.) [*Trapp*].

Ver. 18. *Chariot* a fit comparison, because God is said to *sit* and to *dwell* within them. Because a *chariot* is made to carry a person from place to place, an intimation that God was not fixed to them by the building of the temple, but that he would remove from them if they forsook him [*Benson*].

Vers. 20, 21. Learn—1. The dignity and lustre of David's dying hour. 2. The usefulness of David's death, as well as life. 3. The great privilege of those interested and blessed with the dying counsels and prayers of the godly [*J. Burns, D.D.*].

ILLUSTRATION TO CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 2. *Hear me.* The death-bed of a saint oftentimes resembles the setting sun, whose rays are the brightest when it is nearest the horizon. "The tongues of dying men enforce attention, like deep harmony" [*Shaks.*].

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,

Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of
heaven" [*Young*].

Ver. 10. *Take heed.* The substance of a child's duty and the foundation of his happiness lie in these two rules laid down in Prov. i. 7-9, namely, to fear God and to honour his parents [*Nicholls*].

Ver. 20. *My God.* How few like David have God and gold together [*G. Villiers*]. "There is much religion in the possessive pronouns" [*Lut'her*].

CHAPTER XXIX.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] We have in this chapter contributions of the princes to the temple (vers. 1-9); the public thanksgiving of David (vers. 10-13); David's prayer for Solomon (vers. 14-19); Solomon's succession to the throne (vers. 20-25); the close of David's reign and life (vers. 26-30).

Vers. 1-9.—*Contributions to the temple. Palace*, a Persian word (*cf.* Esther i. 2-5; Neh. i. 1; Dan. viii. 2) applied to the temple (ver. 19). Ver. 2. *Onyx* (Gen. ii. 12); *glist ring*, "coloured stones;" some dark stones, of a hue like that of the antimony by which women painted their eyes [*Speak. Com.*]. *Marble*, white stones or alabaster, found near Damascus. Ver. 3. *Proper good* from private sources, not from spoils in war, &c. Ver. 4. *Ophir*, brought by Arabian traders; *overlay* with veneer. Ver. 5. *Consecrate*, literally "fill his hands." Ver. 6. *Rulers*, probably stewards of the king's substance (*ch.* xxviii. 1; xxvii. 25-31). Ver. 7. *Drams*, Heb. *adarcon* (Ezra viii. 27), known as Persian *daric*, the same as the *darkemon* (Ezra ii. 69; Neh. vii. 70), variously valued at 12s. 6d. and 25s. The writer does not intend to say that the Jews possessed darics in David's time, but to express in language what would be intelligible to his readers, the value of gold subscribed, and to translate the terms of his document, whatever they were, into terms in use in his own day [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 8. *Jehiel*, one of the temple treasurers (xxvi. 21, 22).

Vers. 10-19.—*David's thanksgiving. Father*, Israel (ver. 18). Ver. 11, *cf.* Rev. v. 12. Ver. 12. *Power*, physical and moral. Ver. 15. *Strangers* (*cf.* Ps. xxix. 12). *Abiding*, literally, "there is no hope"—i.e., of abiding or continuing here. Ver. 17. *Triest* (*cf.* Ps. vii. 9; Ps. xvii. 3; 1 Sam. xvi. 7). Ver. 18. *This, i.e.*, "preserve for ever this spirit of liberal and spontaneous giving in the hearts of thy people" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Prepare*, establish their hearts.

Vers. 20-25.—*Solomon enthroned king. Worshipped*, prostrated themselves to the ground; same outward reverence to God and king, with the respect due to each. Ver. 21. *Le.*, with drink offerings appropriate to each kind of burnt offering, and required by law to accompany them (*cf.* Num. xv. 5, 7, 10). Ver. 22. *Second*, for first see 1 Kings i. 35-39. This a more formal and representative. Ver. 23. *Sat.* Solomon actually reigned during some short time of his father's life (1 Kings i.). Ver. 24. *All sons*, even Adonijah (1 Kings i. 53). Ver. 25. *Magnified* (1 Kings iii. 13), Solomon's grandeur traced to God.

Vers. 26-30.—*Close of David's reign and life.* Ver. 27. *Time* (*cf.* 1 Kings ii. 11). For more exact account of duration of reign, 2 Sam. v. 5. Ver. 28. *Age*, in his seventy-first year. Ver. 29. *Book* used by author; of this and book of Gad no account. *Seer*, a commoner title than that of Samuel. Ver. 30. *Went*, a singular expression. "No other instance of this in Scripture. 'The times that went over David' were the events that happened to him. Compare his own words in Ps. xxxi. 15: 'My times are in thy hand'" [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.—Verses 1-10.

David addresses all the congregation respecting his son's tender age, his personal gifts, and efforts towards building the temple. He makes an earnest appeal, and meets with a ready response. **I. David's example in giving.** "I have prepared with all my might." 1. *Giving from his own resources.* *Public* resources, such as spoils of war, numerous and most valuable. *Private* resources; his own "proper good" or private property; additional gifts; selected with great care "the gold of Ophir," the purest and finest in the world (Job xxii. 24; Is. xiii. 12); bestowed for a specific purpose; the overlaying of the walls of the temple. 2. *Giving in right order.* The heart first, and then the substance. True religion touches the heart and conscience, and regulates the gifts. "I have set my affection to the house of my God" (ver. 3). 3. *Giving in true spirit.* "I have prepared with all my might." Might, intelligence, and ardour must be thrown into God's work, or nothing will be done. David casts not the burden

upon princes and people, though the temple for them, but contributes to the utmost of his power, and sets them a noble example. **II. David's appeal to others to give.** "Who, then, is willing to consecrate his service?" (ver. 5). He levies no tax, but asks for free-will offerings of the people. This the right way to build, support, and establish the house of God. This appeal founded on many things. 1. *He reminds them of Solomon's necessities.* Young and tender, without much wisdom and experience, but under great responsibilities. Yet God had chosen him for the undertaking. Hence no reproach to David for partiality and preference of Solomon. Young people should ever be encouraged in good works. 2. *He sets before them the greatness of the work.* "The work is great." Great not in outward appearance, but great in purpose. "The palace not for man, but for the Lord God." 3. *He stimulates them by his own example.* "Now I have prepared." Exhortation and appeal must be backed by personal effort and example to be efficient. **III. The response to David's appeal** (vers. 6-9). They "offered willingly." The response was: 1. *Heartly response* not only filled their hands, but offered "with perfect heart" (ver. 9). "Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Ex. xxv. 2). 2. *Immediate response.* No hesitation, no consultation nor delay. This damps ardour, and makes all work difficult. 3. *Liberal response.* Influenced by the persuasive address and powerful example of the King, they gave according to their abilities. Their united contributions amounted to the gross sum—of gold 5,000 talents and 10,000 drams, of silver 10,000 talents, besides brass and iron. **IV. The results of this response.** "They rejoiced"—"were glad with great gladness." David rejoiced to see the work on which his heart was set so earnestly carried on. Princes rejoiced under a sense of duty rightly performed, and God's acceptance of it. People rejoiced in the generosity of their rulers. The selfish and niggardly are miserable; the sympathetic and self-denying are happy and cheerful. "The liberal soul shall be made fat"—

"The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he who loves not others lives unblest."

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.—Verses 1-10.

The life of David fitted to encourage faith in God, and proves that a good man may begin a work which shall continue after his death. Learn from these verses—**I. The nearer a good man approaches his end, the more spiritually minded he becomes.** David intensely anxious about the work of God. Past experience of divine favour and anticipations of future good—consciousness of God's presence and of God's guidance give hope and assurance. The powers of the world to come influence and prepare for the end. **II. The more spiritually minded a good man becomes, the greater his influence upon others.** The force of his example, the authority of his teaching, backed by a consistent consecrated life, have more influence than the sceptre. Exalted in place and dignity, David shone in spiritual character, drew because he led, stimulated others because earnest himself. **III. The greater influence a good man has upon others, the more certain will God's work be accomplished.** David died before the temple was built, but his influence lived. His persuasion, not enactment, won the hearts and prompted the efforts of the people. He rejoiced in the succession of his son to the throne, and in the offerings of the nation for the work of God.

A CALL TO EARLY DEVOTEDNESS.—Verse 5.

I. We shall explain what we regard as the consecration of service to God. 1. There must be correct views of the Divine character and claims; 2. A practical obedience to the will of God; 3. Active exertion to promote the Divine glory.

II. We shall present the considerations which ought to urge to an engagement in the service of God. 1. We are placed under universal and imperative obligation to do so; 2. The influence his service has in preventing the degradation and promoting the dignity of our nature; 3. The true and solid pleasure his service communicates to the soul; 4. The glorious recompense by which the engagements of his service are consummated. III. We shall impress the question by which, to an engagement in the service of God, you are emphatically challenged [*J. Parsons*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 3. *I have set my affection.* The force of religious affection for one thing. 1. In its possession and government of the mind. To build the thought of his mind, the object of his life. "This one thing I do." 2. In its command over the resources of our life. He prepared and gave with all his might gold and silver; the spoils of his enemies, and the treasures of his palace, devoted to the chosen work, not to transient pleasure, nor temporal interests. Such thought and pains, such concentration of purpose and affection rebuke the loiterers and half-hearted.

Ver. 5. *Consecration.* 1. *Service.* Every child of God is a servant, a worker, a commissioned officer. In performance of life's duties are demanded—First: *A settled purpose*, a purpose arising from a survey of our being, relationships, and surroundings. Life's great question, "What must I do?" Secondly: *An active resolve.* Will the motive power within. The energies of life in the will—rightly directed, obstacles like chaff before it. But religious service specified. Many receive but give not, unprofitable servants, &c. 2. *A willing service.* "Who is willing?" This is the principal quality in Christian service. Gigantic intellect, profusion of gifts, untiring activity, a great moral force, and all these put together without the heart, God will reject; but two mites and the heart He will accept. First: *A willing service is the only efficient service.* Things unwillingly done, badly done. Workers that need not be ashamed of their work, put their heart into it. Secondly: *The willingness of our service is the*

only part of it which is absolutely required. What God wants is nowhere to be found except within the human breast. It is the only treasure God covets. "My son, give me thine heart." 3. *An immediate service.* "This day." Every Jew's attention was fixed on the cherished object of David's life. We are instructed to build a temple for God, have our work planned and we can begin "this day." Look generally at the subject. First: *Seasons for service are never absent.* A farmer is busy summer and winter. Christians need lose no time, nor wait for opportunities which they never find. Ignorant to be taught, erring to lead home and poor always with us. Secondly: *Efficiency and pleasure ensue when service is performed in its own time.* Service of Jesus like a meal, must be taken at its proper time to produce enjoyment and strength. If morning prayer be said at night its unction is lost. *Now* is the gospel's great time, "the accepted time." 4. *The highest service.* "Unto the Lord." Noble motives produce highest service. Some serve Satan, themselves, and the world; as the object, so the nature of the service. Every service receives its inspiration from the Master. The service of the Lord implies, First: *That the mind is perpetually under the influence of divine truth.* Holy thoughts produce holy living. As we think, so we live; he who thinks Christ lives Christ. "Let this mind be also in you, &c." Secondly: *That holy thoughts are actuated by the presence of the Spirit in them.* This communion is maintained by prayer. Best thoughts sent up to heaven to

receive the Master's living touch. The fire must be fanned into a flame by his breath. The praying heart has working hands. Thirdly: *Entire consecration*. We cannot serve two masters. God's service enough to absorb our whole being. These are the steps—a Saviour from sin, an example to follow, efforts put forth, and a reward in expectation. "Not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, &c." [*Thos. Davies, D.D.*].

Ver. 9. *Liberality and joy*. Liberality often brings *temporal* wealth, invariably in *spiritual* matters does it bring wealth and joy of soul. Every effort has reaction, and reaction the law of material and spiritual worlds. The

soul of the miser is always miserable, and sinks lower into spiritual destitution. The good man lives like the sun, and shines to bless in the influence of ideas, wealth, and effort. "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to joy, &c."

Vers. 1-9. *The principles of Christian work*. 1. Personal consecration and example. 2. Willing co-operation by all. 3. Appropriateness of service and gifts. 4. Animated by a true spirit of enthusiasm and joy.

"Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house where gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean"

[*Longfellow*].

HOMILETICS.

THE LAST THANKSGIVING.—Verses 10-20.

Every sentence weighed and measured for the occasion. The scene grand and impressive. "David's Psalms, towards the latter end of the book, are most of them Psalms of praise. The nearer we come to the world of everlasting praise the more we should speak the language and do the work of that world."

I. The infinite perfections of God. Adores God and ascribes glory to him. 1. *God in his unspeakable grandeur*. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness." "Thou art great, and greatly to be feared;" *the power*, "in thine hand is power and might" (ver. 12); *the victory*, "the victory (strength) of Israel" (1 Sam. xv. 29); *the majesty*, "honour and majesty are before him (his inseparable attendants)" (Ps. xcvi. 6). 2. *God in his universal dominion*. "Thine is the kingdom, O Lord." Exalted over all, ruling without rival. 3. *God in his absolute ownership*. "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine." Proprietor, not Trustee, of all the universe. A title underived and not shared by another. His inheritance infinite and secure. He had no predecessor, will have no successor, and nothing will ever pass from him. 4. *God in his covenant relation*. "Lord God of Israel, our Father." The expression more full in ver. 18. He was the tutelary God and fountain of blessing to the patriarchs, with whom he made special covenants. 5. *God in his goodness to men* (ver. 12). "Riches and honour" come from him. He gives strength and makes great. The princes merited nothing by their generosity. All through the influence of his grace; therefore, no ground for boasting. "Let no flesh glory in his presence; for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

II. The peculiar relations of man to the infinite God. The Psalm not only filled with devout reverence to God, in language of beauty and ideal piety; but a description of man as unworthy, dependent, and short-lived. 1. *Man is a dependent creature*. The more we think of God's greatness, the more we feel this, "Who am I?"—(a) Dependent for *substance to give*. "Of thine own have we given thee." (b) Dependent for *the disposition to give* it. He works in us to will and to do, &c. (c) Therefore, *indebted to God for all things*. Thanks due to him for heart and mind, substance and success. 2. *Man is a short-lived creature*. The earth abides, its inhabitants die. Life a *pilgrimage*; we are strangers and sojourners, not at rest, not at home. Life a *shadow*,

transient, dark, and vain; ending in perfect darkness or perfect light. *Life uncertain*: "there is none abiding." We can neither expect to stay long, nor work much while we do stay on earth. If, then, uncertain, what are the services of a poor short life? God favours us by their acceptance. 3. *Man's conduct is observed by God*. "Thou triest the heart." Seest the motives, as well as the gifts for thy cause. Takest pleasure in uprightness of heart. An act, a life may be misinterpreted or despised, but the good man is conscious of integrity ("I know") and may appeal to God, who is acquainted with all our way. We can neither rejoice nor work without a sense of spiritual rectitude. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things."

GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP AND MAN'S OBLIGATION TO HIM.—*Verses 13-16.*

I. God owns all things. 1. Absolutely. "Thine." 2. Universally. "All that is in the heavens, &c." (ver. 11). 3. Perpetually. He will eternally keep his own. **II. Man's obligation to God.** 1. To render thanks to God. Every gift from thee, therefore thank the Giver. "What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits?" 2. To use rightly the gifts of God. Health, time, and money not to be abused—should be used carefully. Stewards should be found faithful. "Will a man rob God?" All essentially God's, and should be willingly given to him.

"Lord, what my talents are I cannot tell,
Till thou shalt give me grace to use them well;
That grace impart; the bliss will then be mine,
But all the power and all the glory thine."

THE SOJOURNERS AND THE SHADOW; OR, DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF LIFE.—*Verses 15.*

Those epithets do not apply to all men indiscriminately. Human life has varied aspects according to moral condition and future expectation. **I. All men are sojourners on earth.** David uses language of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived as men without permanent home. All *sojourners* or *pilgrims* on earth, because all passing through it to a future beyond it. Stern law compels advance. We live and we must die. Not naturalised, no rights of inheritance, foreigners here; we should seek home, rest, and bliss in heaven. **II. All men sojourn in shadows on earth.** "Our days on earth are as a shadow." 1. *Life itself is a shadow*. In swiftness and uncertainty; darkness and perplexing changes. "Shadows in career," says Geo. Herbert. We flee as a shadow and continue not (Job xiv. 2). 2. *Men walk in shadows*. "Every man *walketh* in a vain show (an image)" (Ps. xxxix. 6). "All shadows and pursuing shadows," says Burke. Deceived by sense, refusing to see the only lasting substance; men live in lies, dream of false pleasure, and find everything fleeting and unsubstantial. After all discussions concerning the supreme good, some pointing to pleasure, some to virtue, and others to apathy, who can give a definite and decisive answer? Life without God is vain, and not worth living. "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow" (*Heb.* "the number of the days of the life of his vanity") (Ecc. vi. 12). **III. Only some men are strangers on earth.** Christians are strangers. They feel, dress, and act as such. "Confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth." But a large class of men to whom the world is perfectly congenial; who feel nothing strange, nothing unnatural. They are in their element; find their place and satisfaction in its pursuits and enjoyments. They desire no better country, but seem to fix their

hearts and homes in this, through which they rapidly pass. What a foolish exchange; shadows for substance; trifles or eternity!

“All on earth is shadow,
All beyond is substance. How solid all
Where change is known no more!” [Young].

THE LAST PRAYER.—Verses 18, 19.

After solemn recognition of God's sovereign and universal proprietorship, an unqualified disclaimer of all merit, we have earnest and appropriate prayer for people and prince. **I. Prayer for the people.** Praise should ever end in prayer for ourselves and others. 1. *That they may be kept in the right mind.* “Keep this for ever,” &c. This disposition of joyful, willing consecration of heart and gifts to thee. Let it not be transient and forgotten. 2. *That the perpetuity of this right mind may be properly based.* Promises are broken; appearances change and hopeful beginnings may fall through. The heart, the deepest source, must be fixed, framed, and established. “Prepare their heart unto thee.” **II. Prayer for Solomon.** Blessings fit and most needful. 1. *That he may obey God.* “Give to Solomon, my son,” first of all sincerity, a perfect heart. Then help him “to keep thy commandments,” binding on conscience; “thy testimonies,” evidences of God's character; “and thy statutes,” enactments for instruction of the people. 2. *That he may build the temple of God.* “And to build the palace.” Mark the order—right in heart first, then engagement in work. True to God, faithful in service. This prayer required now. We build temples, fortunes, and families—make “provision” for grand enterprises, but forget that materials, strength, and stability come from God. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 10–20. *David's thanksgiving.* 1. Its adoration of God. 2. Its acknowledgment of dependence upon him. 3. Its recognition of the influence of his grace. 4. Its solemn appeal to conscious integrity. 5. Its earnest prayer for king and people.

Vers. 12–14. *The right value and right use of divine gifts.* 1. We only give what has been given to us. 2. We only give what we must leave. 3. We have but a short time to give at all.

Ver. 14. *Of thine own have we given thee.* 1. Apply to temporal things. Money, time, &c. 2. Apply to spiritual things. Repentance, faith, and works, bestowed by God and due to him. “When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Ver. 15. *Apply to the Christian.* Be vigilant in duty while here. Improve the world as much as possible while in it. Seek to persuade others to go with you to “a better country, even a heavenly one.” *Our days on earth, &c.* 1. The *brevity* of life. “Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth.” 2. The *vanity* of life. “Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.” 3. The *emptiness* of life. “Every man walketh in a vain show.” 4. The *end* of life. “Make me to know mine end.” “Days are one of the shortest measures of time; but long enough to decipher man's life by” [Trapp].

Ver. 19. *To keep thy commandments.* Not for wealth, power, nor learning. “Learn here,” says Trapp, “what to pray for in the behalf of our children. A child of many such prayers cannot easily miscarry.”

HOMILETICS.

SOLOMON'S ELEVATION TO THE THRONE.—Verses 20-25.

The second time. The first done hastily, on account of Adonijah's conspiracy (cf. 1 Ki. i. 35-39). This anointment deliberate, most solemn, and by a representative assembly. **I. The Divine choice of Solomon to the throne.** "S. sat on the throne of the Lord." Not David's throne, nor Israel's to give away. The *Lord's* in a special sense. Hence the government called a *Theocracy*, God's government, by Josephus. All thrones belong to him. He sets up, deposes, and determines the destiny of rulers. "By me kings rule and decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." **II. The loyal obedience to Solomon on the throne.** This most joyful and universal. 1. *The people submitted.* Represented by "all the princes and the mighty men," they put the hand under Solomon's thigh and bound themselves by oath to allegiance. "All Israel obeyed him." 2. *The royal family submitted.* "All the sons likewise of King David." Some of them were elder and of nobler birth or of nobler mothers. But now convinced by the national act and God's choice that Solomon was to be king. Adonijah failed and died. God's will done notwithstanding man's claims and ambitious designs. **III. The prosperity of Solomon on the throne.** "The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly." Notice—1. *The source of prosperity.* Ascribed to the source of all greatness. A majesty "bestowed," not humanly created. 2. *The peace which attended the prosperity.* No rival to disquiet, no foreign power to oppose. "All Israel obeyed him." 3. *A prosperity unequalled.* "Such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." A fit type of Christ. "He was a king blessed of the King of kings" [*Shuks.*]. "I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem."

DAVID'S LATTER END.—Verses 26-30.

The writer now finishes a picture which presents the great king in meridian splendour. The brilliant life is closing and the evening is calm and peaceable. **I. The length of David's reign.** "The time that he reigned over Israel was forty years." This divided into two eventful periods. About "seven years in Hebron" (2 Sam. v. 5), and "three and thirty in Jerusalem." A reign of glory, yet falling short of the divine ideal; signalled by services which contributed to the exaltation of the kingdom and the glory of God; but darkened by crimes and calamities, and which gradually prepared for the reign of his successor. **II. The end of David's life.** "He died." Then the mightiest men are mortal; the most useful withdrawn from ministry; and the world can get on without its greatest and best men. "The thing is not to leave a name behind us—a mere name. It is to leave behind influences that hearts will feel, memories that will be cherished at home, and that will be blessed by those whom we have served and helped in life" [*Dr. Packer*]. He died. 1. *Rich in circumstances.* "Full of riches and honour." Enough of this world's wealth by which he adorned the capital and prepared for the building of God. 2. *In a good old age.* Not so old as many predecessors, not exceeding seventy years. But his life not cut short, lasted the appointed term and filled with opportunities and work. In expressive Hebrew, "full of days." Many days empty and many lives like a blank! Nothing done, everything lost! 3. *Satisfied in mind.* "Full (i.e., satisfied) of days" (cf. Gen. xxv. 8; Job xlii. 17). Satisfied with days given both in number and character; filled with gratitude and submission. 4. *Ready to depart.* He had "served his generation by the will of God," now ready to fall asleep. Having seen God's salvation, he

was wishful to depart in peace. A tranquil sunset! **III. The records of David's kingdom.** Not given in full. "The times" indicate—1. *His private life.* "Times that went over him," of joy and sorrow, of conflict and rest, &c. (cf. Job xxiv. 1; Ps. xxxi. 16). 2. *His civil career.* "And over Israel." National changes in political and ecclesiastical affairs. 3. *His military enterprises.* "Over all the kingdoms of the countries," hostile or friendly. A sovereign who raised his country to power and dominion, beloved in life and honoured in death. His "royal majesty," was not in the splendour of his palace and retinue; but in the unity and moral worth of his people, the excellency of his life and the legacy of his reign.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 20. *Bless the Lord.* David was excellent at this—viz., stirring up others to join with him in praising God (see Ps. xxxiv. 3 and ciii. 20) [Trapp]. *Worship*, its true nature: "Bless the Lord." Its solemn expression: "Bowed down their heads." Its sublime object: "Worshipped the Lord." Its connection with civil reverence: "Worshipped the Lord and the king."

Ver. 23. *Solomon sat on the throne.* The fulfilment of promise, the display of power and providence, and the type of the Lord Jesus. *David died and Solomon reigned in his stead.* Compare them—1. As kings of Israel. 2. As servants of God. 3. As authors of inspired songs and literature.

Vers. 29, 30. These words indicate—1. The fragmentary record. The books mentioned are lost, except a few particulars in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. They were sources used by the author. 2. The order in which events are given. In accordance with his design the writer signifies the religious aspect of the nation,

has omitted many events from David's history, and enlarged in details of arrangements of worship and preparations for the building of the temple. He writes partly as an excerpter and partly a supplementer.

Ver. 29. Three eminent men, personally acquainted with David through the principal part of his life—*Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.* "The three (Heb.) words, *Roch, Nubi, and Chozeh,* are here brought together and apparently contrasted" (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 9) [Dr. Jamieson].

Life's changing current. 1. Times make a deep mark upon the body, the least important portion of our complex nature. 2. Equally marked is the effect of "the times" as they pass over us upon our intellectual nature. 3. Not less striking or important is the stamp of time upon the history of our sensibilities. 4. The most important change is the one that refers to our moral and spiritual state. 5. Our social and relative condition is subject to the constant variations of time [Dr. S. T. Spear].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXIX.

Ver. 6. *Offered willingly.* Rich men's presents are gold and silver, or other costly things. Mine must be recommended by the affectionate pleasure with which I give them [The Ven. Bede when dying]. It is the comfort of poverty that our affections are valued, not our presents [Bp. Hall].

Ver. 14. *Who am I?* What I have done is worthy of nothing but

silence and forgetfulness; but what God hath done for me is worthy of everlasting and thankful memory [Ibid.].

Ver. 15. *Shadow.* In this I see that we, all we that live, are but vain shadows, unsubstantial dreams [Sophocles].

Ver. 19. *Give unto Solomon.* No good man is jealous of his son, but desires to see his children more famous than himself [Theodoret].

Vers. 20-22. *Worshipped.* Devotion, when it does not lie under the check of reason, is apt to degenerate into enthusiasm [*Addison*]. All is holy where devotion kneels [*Holmes*].

Vers. 26-28. *Died.* The death-bed of saints often resembles the setting sun, whose rays are the brightest when it is nearest the horizon. "The tongues of dying men enforce attention like deep harmony" [*Shakes.*].

Ver. 30. *Times.* Amongst rational beings that life is longest, whether brief or protracted its outward turn,

into which the largest amount of mind, of mental and moral activity, is condensed. It is possible for the longest life to be really briefer than the shortest, and the child or youth may die older, with more of life crowded into his brief existence, than he whose dull and stagnant being drags on to an inglorious old age [*Caird*].

"We must need weep the chance and change of life,

And mortal sorrows touch a mortal's heart" [*Virg. Æn. i. 462*].

HOMILETIC COMMENTARY

ON THE

SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

INTRODUCTION.

SEE the general introduction of the first book for analysis and date. "The most remarkable feature in the historical books of Scripture, and especially of Kings and Chronicles, is their religious, theocratic character. Secular history gives the public changes which nations have undergone, with their causes and results. Church history traces the progress of sentiment, and of various influences in relation to the Church. But here, king, church, state are all represented as under God. The character of each king is decided by his fidelity to the religious obligations of his office. Of each it is said, 'He walked in the ways of David his father,' and so prospered, or of Jeroboam, who 'made Israel to sin,' and so failed. These books are valuable as the history of God and His law in the nation, and that nation a monarchy; as the Books of Joshua and Judges are the history of God and His law in an aristocracy or democracy, or as the earlier books are the history of God and His law in the family. In the Prophets and in the Acts of the Apostles we have glimpses of what is to be the history of God and His law in the world. Mark, therefore, the prominence given to the erection of the temple; the numerous references to the ancient law, especially when the two kingdoms were drawing near to their end, as if to account for their decay and approaching fall; the frequent interposition of prophets, now rebuking the people and now braving the sovereign; the deposition and succession of kings; and the connection everywhere traced between what seem to be mere political incidents and the fidelity or idolatry of the age. Were nations wise, these records would prove their best instructors. They are adapted to teach alike the world and the Church. The genealogical tables, though to us comparatively uninteresting, were highly important among the Jews, who were made by prophetic promises extremely observant in these particulars. These tables give the sacred line through which the promise was transmitted for nearly 3,500 years, a fact itself unexampled in the history of the human race" [*Angus*]. "This history of the Jewish monarchy, as it is more authentic, so it is more interesting and instructive than the histories of other monarchies. We had the story of the house of David before, in the first and second books of Kings, intermixed with that of the kings of Israel, which there

took more room than that of Judah; but here we have it entire. Much is repeated here which we had before, yet many of the passages of the story are enlarged upon, and divers added which we had not before, especially relating to the affairs of religion; for it is a church history, and it is written for our learning, to let nations and families know that then, and then only, they can expect to prosper, when they keep in the way of their duty to God; for all along the good kings prospered and the wicked kings suffered. The truth of the word of God appears, *‘Those that honour me I will honour, but those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.’*”

CHAPTER I.

CRITICAL NOTES.] The reign of Solomon is comprised in nine chapters of this book, corresponding to 1 Kings i.-xi., and forms the third part of the whole work. This chapter contains the sacrifice at Gibeon, the vision and the wealth of Solomon.

Vers. 1-6.—*Solomon's offering at Gibeon. Strengthened*, a favourite word (cf. xii. 13; xiii. 21; xxi. 4), meaning established, firmly settled in government. *Magnified* (1 Chr. xxix. 25). Ver. 2. *All Israel*, by their representatives. *Captains* (1 Chr. xxvii. 1; xxviii. 1). *Judges* desirable on all occasions like this (1 Chr. xxiii. 4). *Chief of fathers*. Heads of families still recognised, though having no special function (cf. *Speak. Com.*). Ver. 3. *Gibeon*. Through inroads of Philistines, tabernacle removed from Shiloh to Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1); after destruction of Nob by Saul to Gibeon (1 Sam. xxii. 9). Ver. 4. *Ark* separated from tabernacle, consequently two centres of worship (cf. account in 1 Chr. xiii. and xv.). Ver. 5. *Altar* (marg.) "was there;" this, therefore, the legitimate place of worship. *Sought*, i.e., frequented it, in the habit of making use of it [*Speak. Com.*]. Some give "sought Him, the Lord."

Vers. 7-12.—*Solomon's vision at Gibeon. Night*, after sacrifice, through dream (1 Kings iii. 5-15). Ver. 8. *Me to reign*. First case of son succeeding father. Ver. 9. *Promise*, special, made to David, that his successor should be wise and able to judge. Though no express record, Ps. lxxii. amounts to nearly the same; a Psalm undoubtedly Messianic, yet its primary subject is Solomon. May we not understand Solomon here as calling upon God to make good this prophecy, to "establish" this implied "promise"? [*Speak. Com.*] Ver. 10. *Knowledge*, insight (cf. Dan. i. 4-17; Ecc. x. 20). *Wisdom*, the power of applying knowledge rightly. *Go out*, do all parts of the kingly office; reminding of Deut. xxxi. 2; 1 Sam. xviii. 13-16; 1 Kings iii. 7. Vers. 11 and 12. God's answer. Long life omitted here, given in 1 Kings iii. 14, conditionally. *Riches and wealth*, stores of commodities ready for use.

Vers. 13-17.—*Solomon's riches came* "from the high place that was at Gibeon to Jerusalem" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 14-17. This passage is very nearly identical with 1 Kings x. 26-29. The only difference of any importance is the addition here (ver. 15) of the words "and gold," which do not occur in 1 Kings x. 27. The touch thus added is characteristic of the writer of Chronicles, who is more rhetorical and more bold in his use of *hyperbole* than the author of Kings [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE SPLENDID BEGINNING.—Verses 1-12.

Solomon *magnified* in character, accession, and choice. Many princes have had good fathers, wise training, and great privileges, but lacked wisdom and turned out badly. Solomon crowned while David lived, surrounded by a loyal people and blessed by Divine Providence. His beginning wise, most promising and glorious. **I. Solomon's accession to the throne was providentially secured.** "The Lord his God was with him." Chosen, he was enthroned, not deprived of the kingdom. Endangered by sedition, he was "strengthened," established. The feast of conspirators broken up. Adonijah fled to the altar for refuge. God's providence opened up the way, and God's promise was fulfilled. In allusion to the rapid suppression of resistance, and to this signal entrance on his new reign, without rival or rebel, Solomon declares, "As the Lord liveth, which hath *established* me and *set me* on the throne of David my father," &c. **II. Solomon's claims to the throne were sanctioned by a representative assembly.** He was confirmed by recognition and allegiance of all the tribes in representatives. Captains, judges, and heads of families, princes, and people—all received him. Those in authority should side with right and use their influence to promote true religion

and God's glory. Weakness in kings, selfishness in rulers, and disaffection in people, outrage liberty, destroy the peace, and endanger the throne of kingdoms.

“Let not the world see fear and sad mistrust
Govern the motion of a kingly eye” [Shakes.].

III. Solomon's accession to the throne was signalled by solemn acts of worship. “All the congregation with him,” a vast concourse of dignitaries in solemn procession on its way up the hill to Gibeon, six miles north of Jerusalem, to offer royal sacrifices! 1. *In obedience to divine law.*

The brazen altar was there (ver. 6); that is, the Gibeonite sanctuary was still the legal, the official and historically rightful place for burnt offerings. 2. *In appropriate magnificence.* The holocaust became the rank and attests the splendour of the sovereign on this occasion. Sacrifices abundant. Zadok the officiating high priest (1 Chr. xvi. 39). The time-honoured altar prepared by the skill of Bezaleel in the wilderness (Ex. xxxviii. 1).

IV. Solomon's accession to the throne was in a spirit of devout supplication. How many kings begin their reigns; how many youths in critical moments, turning-points in life, begin their course altogether differently! Alas! many gain distinctions, enter life fully equipped, for awhile out-distance others; but with the turn of fortune fall behind and end in ruin. Solomon remembered the position of his predecessor, his own youth and weakness, the responsibility under which he was placed, and made request for gifts and grace to help him.

When Victoria learned that she was about to become Queen of England, her first words to the Archbishop of Canterbury were, “I beg your Grace to pray for me.” Together they knelt, and the new reign began with prayer.

V. Solomon's accession to the throne was unequalled in splendour. None before him, nor after him, had the like (ver. 12).

1. *Outward splendour.* “Riches and wealth and honour.” Good in themselves and good as a means of usefulness. The good which the world seeks; but this honour decays. All worldly greatness is fleeting in character and worthless at last. “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” 2. *Moral splendour.* “Wisdom and knowledge” higher than material wealth. The riches of Cræsus would not add a fraction of value to a man. “The gold is but the guinea stamp.” “How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver.” Better, for it enriches its possessor, creates higher enjoyments, invests with greater dignity, and is destined to longer existence. “King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.”

SOLOMON'S CHOICE.—Verses 7-12.

Probably at the close of festivities on Gibeon, when the mind of Solomon had been elevated, and his heart touched, that God appeared to him in a dream; gave him the option of everything good in the world. He felt intense desire, and offered earnest prayer for wisdom. Whether the dream was imaginary or not, the choice was made, and God's grant of it real. Learn—I. **That ability to discharge the duties of our calling is most desirable.** Some time since a paper appeared in a popular *Review* under the title, “What knowledge is of most worth?” the object of which was to show the sufficiency of what is generally called *science* to guide in life. “The universal reply is *science*. This is the verdict on all counts.” But what is meant by science? If mere education without religion, knowledge without wisdom, we cannot agree with it. There is a difference between science and wisdom. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. *Science* seeks truth for its own sake, *wisdom* for practical uses. Science

exercises the intellect, wisdom affects the heart. A man cannot be wise and able to fulfil his mission who does not use what he knows. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, to govern as kings "in righteousness and judgment," to rule as masters "in the fear of the Lord," to win souls as ministers, for "he that winneth souls is wise." **II. That this ability can only come from God.** Solomon's surroundings favourable, education good, friends numerous, and wealth enormous, but he lacked wisdom, and looked to God for it. True wisdom is needed as much to build up the Christian Church, to govern a kingdom and rule a house, as to rear the tabernacle. If there be capacity, culture and application may make a scholar, a philosopher, or an orator. But "the wisdom which is profitable to direct" is "the wisdom from above." We must look to the source from whence Bezaleel and Aholiab gained their skill and ability (Ex. xxxv. 30-35). "Give me wisdom and knowledge." **III. That where the desire for this ability is supreme, God will honour and bless it.** "I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked" (1 Kings iii. 13). Great pretension to wisdom often covers the want of it. Shallow streams make greatest noise. There must be—1. *Intense desire.* A feeling of deep want. "This was in thine heart." Opinionated, self-sufficient men will never get it. A craving for its possession, growing out of sense of need, a cry of the soul, "Where shall wisdom be found?" 2. *Earnest search.* Mere want or desire not enough. There must be *effort*, honest, strenuous, and persevering. A search as for silver and gold. "If thou seekest her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures, &c." 3. *There must be prayer.* "Give me now wisdom and knowledge." God will honour our petitions when sincere; will give inferior when we ask for superior blessings. God gave the wisdom asked, and the wealth unasked. If we value and pray for understanding, God will do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

THE BLESSEDNESS OF WISDOM.—*Verses 10-12.*

I. It helps to govern life. "Who can judge this thy people?" 1. *By giving insight.* "Knowledge of men and things," understanding of the times in which we live, and their demands upon us. 2. *By imparting activity.* "That I may go out and come in before this people." Public activity unceasing and unchecked. 3. *By teaching us to avoid evil and do good.* "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." "When thou goest thy steps shall not be straitened" (freedom in the great highway of life); "and when thou runnest thou shalt not stumble" (safety in activity) (Prov. iv. 12). **II. It endows with best wealth.** Wealth of soul. "For the soul to be without knowledge it is not good." Wealth of the character. "She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." An ornament better than kings' robes, a crown not of fading laurels or rusting metal. Adornments of holiness preparing for the crown of glory which fadeth not away. Character better than cash, the only wealth that will go into the other world, and determine condition there. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death." **III. It ensures permanent good.** It is excellent in itself, described as "the fear of the Lord," and "the knowledge of God," blessing the intellect and the heart. In this life often brings riches, honour, length of days, and unequalled privileges. But these things may all end. Heavenly wisdom is supereminent, an eternal possession, a treasure we can lay up in heaven. It sets before us the way of life, and secures our salvation. Worldly good pertains to earth only; here is limitless

blessing helping to escape the miseries of false choice, and giving endless possession of perfect bliss.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *God with him.* 1. God is often against the kings of the earth. This seen in the disasters which he brings on their armies, &c., and may be illustrated by the histories of many kings mentioned in the Bible. 2. God is with some kings for the punishment of others. The wicked are the sword of God. 3. God was with Solomon for the good of Israel; with him in answer to prayer. 4. God was not with Solomon unconditionally [*Bib. Museum*].

Ver. 7. *How to get rich.* "Ask what I shall give thee, &c." Observe, for the acquirement of the highest wealth that "asking"—1. Is the simplest method. Only a word. 2. Is the divinely appointed method (Matt. vii. 7; Mark xiv. 38). 3. Is the only method. Purchase is impossible. Deserts? We have none. 4. Is the certain method. It never has failed yet. 5. Is the abundantly enforced method. Enforced by the whole Bible. by the story of God's acts, the promises and exhortations, the life and death of Jesus. 6. Has ever been the abundantly successful method [*R. A. Griffin*].

Vers. 7-10. *Solomon's Choice.* I. The address which God made to Solomon when He said, "Ask, &c.," He does in effect make to each of us,

especially to the young. II. Though we need not the qualification which Solomon required for his kingly office, yet we all need spiritual wisdom and understanding, and may therefore imitate his example. III. God is pleased with those who make the choice and offer up the prayer of Solomon. Because—1. It is the effect of His grace; 2. It indicates opinions and feelings similar to his own; 3. It indicates humility; 4. It shows a benevolent concern for his glory, and for the happiness of their fellow-creatures; 5. It actually tends to promote his glory. IV. All who make this choice and adopt this prayer shall certainly be favoured with a wise and understanding heart [*Dr. Payson*].

The Prayer for Wisdom. I. Come and see a youth who at a critical moment is found in prayer. II. Come and see a king's son who prays exclusively for wisdom. III. Come and see a humble one who prays not in vain. IV. Come and see here a favoured one who receives much more than he asks for. V. Come and see an unhappy one who by his own fault has forfeited the blessings of his prayer [*Dr. J. Van Oosterzee*].

"To know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom" [*Milton*].

HOMILETICS.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH.—Verses 13-17.

This passage refers to commerce with Egypt in exports and imports, and is like 1 Kings x. 26-29. The road from Egypt to Syria not always under the control of the Israelites. Solomon gained complete possession of the country and took the trade in horses between Egypt and northern nations into his own hands. **I. Wealth derived from trading speculations.** In addition to large treasures collected and bequeathed by his father, Solomon's wealth derived from commerce with other nations. His fleets brought gold and silver from Ophir and Tharshish, and made them plenteous as stones in Jerusalem. His chariots and chariot horses or chargers were of the best kind of Egyptian breed and highly valued. Kings of the Hittites and Syria welcomed Jerusalem as the opening of an emporium for trade. **Inland cities founded for special**

markets, and lofty towers on the coast pointed to commerce with distant countries.

II. Wealth acquired in opposition to God's commands. The King forbidden to multiply horses and gold under the Theocracy (Deut. xvii. 16, 17). He must trust in the Lord God, not in chariots and horses (Ps. xx. 7). Besides, in a hilly country like Judea, cavalry of no essential service; and going to Egypt might open up the way to idolatry and corruption again. But Solomon must equal other nations, hence his passion for horses, a prohibited luxury, led to risk and excess. Wealth gained unjustly is held insecurely. "Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness than he that is perverse in his ways though he be rich." **III. Wealth therefore risky in its possession.** Prosperity of Solomon his great misfortune. Indulgence outran want. Abundant leisure to gratify desires. Prosperous enterprises, rank, riches, and power were his. His fame spread and raised to the pinnacle of glory among nations. But ambition mastered him. Wealth the first step downwards. His wisdom availed little and his end ruin. Sad that a beginning so promising should end in consequences so fearful. The smallest departure from rectitude may lead to grievous errors and fearful miseries. Neither wealth nor worldly wisdom can check a downward course. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." "In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us."

THE KING'S MERCHANTS.—Verse 16.

Linon yarn means influx (*mikre*), and thence import (*mabo*), contrast of export (Sept. 1 Kings x. 28); in which case the verse would run thus: "And the export of horses for Solomon was from Egypt; and the import which the king's merchants took was an import in price"—that is, in money. It was more convenient for Solomon to send cash than commodities in exchange for the chariots and horses [*Murphy*]. **I. The advantages of commerce.** In softening manners and breaking down prejudices. In helping industry, promoting peace, and stimulating into Nature's resources. **II. The blessings of the nation whose sovereign takes an interest in commerce.** Kings may aid in developing commerce, reviving depressed industries, and in adopting enlightened policy. Our own country privileged. "As soon as the commercial spirit acquires vigour," says Robertson, "and begins to gain an ascendant in any society, we discern a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negotiations."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER I.

Vers. 3, 6. The national worship was still in the unsettled state in which it had been since the first entrance into Palestine. "The people sacrificed in high places." The chief local sanctity still adhered to the spot where "the Tabernacle of the congregation" stood, on what was called "the great high-place of Gibeon." Hither as on a solemn pilgrimage, with a vast concourse of dignitaries, the young King came to offer royal sacrifices on his accession. A thousand victims were consumed on the ancient altar. The night was spent within the sacred city

of Gibeon. And now occurred one of those prophetic dreams which had already been the means of Divine communication in the time of Samuel. Thrice in Solomon's life—at the three epochs of his rise, of his climax, of his fall—is such a warning recorded [*Dean Stanley*].

Ver. 10. *Wisdom* consists chiefly in three things—1. Knowledge to discern. 2. Skill to judge. 3. Activity to prosecute [*T. Watson*]. He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise because he had set his heart upon it [*Stanley*]. *Who can?*

Wisdom is preferred to riches, to long life, and to victory over enemies—the common ambition of kings. Honourable to any man, but especially to one so young as Solomon; the dictate of early piety and of the purest patriotism; expressing the most profound humility in circumstances favourable to the growth of pride; so moderate and so modest; breathing sentiments of the deepest gratitude to God, and of entire devotion to the public welfare [Dr. T. Guthrie].

“Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar” [Wordsworth].

Ver. 11. *In thine heart.* Without a rich heart wealth is an ugly beggar [Emerson].

Ver. 12. *I will give.* God is a light that is never darkened, an unwearyed life that cannot die, a fountain always flowing, a garden of life, a seminary of wisdom, a radical beginning of all goodness [Quarles].

Vers. 14–17. *Prosperity.* Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye—glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument [Jeremy Taylor].

CHAPTER II.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter corresponds with 1 Kings v. It comprises preparations for building the temple (vers. 1, 2); Solomon's message to Hiram (vers. 3–10); Hiram's reply (vers. 11–16); and the census of the strangers (vers. 17, 18).

Vers. 1, 2.—*Preparations for building.* Determined, i.e., commanded, gave orders to build. *Name* (1 Chr. xxii. 10; cf. 1 Kings v. 5). *Kingdom*, royal palace. Ver. 2. The substance of this verse given in ver. 18, here indicative of magnitude of the undertaking.

Vers. 3–10.—*Solomon's message to Hiram.* H. had congratulated Sol. (1 Kings v. 1). *Deal* (cf. 1 Chr. xiv. 1 and 2 Sam. v. 11). *Cedars* (1 Chr. xiv. 1). Ver. 4. *Incense*, lit. incense of spices (marg.); the regular incense burned every morning and every evening (Ex. xxx. 7); for symbolic meaning, see Rev. viii. 3, 4. *Shewbread* (cf. Ex. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5–9; Num. iv. 7). *Moons* (Num. xxviii. 11–15). *Feasts*, three great annual. Ver. 5. *Great*, exceeding in size any separate building in Palestine and any temple of the gods of surrounding nations. See Stanley's *Jewish Ch.*, vol. ii., p. 224. Ver. 6. *Able* (cf. 1 Kings viii. 27; 2 Chr. vi. 18). “In the question, ‘Who am I?’ (cf. 1 Chr. xxix. 14) there is implied: a house for him to dwell in I cannot build; and with this is connected the antithesis; but only for the purpose of burning incense before him, i.e., only to maintain a place in which God may be honoured by sacrifice, can I venture to build him a house” [Keil]. Ver. 7. *Cunning*, i.e., skilful to work in gold (1 Chr. xxii. 15) and with knowledge of sculpture in metal and wood; a man to design and superintend all work in metals and other materials (Ex. xxv. 4). Ver. 8. *Soud*. “The cedar and cypress were valued as being both rare and durable; the algum or almug trees (likewise a foreign wood), though not got on Lebanon, is mentioned as being procured through Hiram” [Jamieson]. Ver. 9. *Wonderful*, lit. great and wonderful. Ver. 10. *Give*. “According to Kings, Solomon's original proposal was simply to pay Hiram's workmen for their labour, and it was at Hiram's suggestion that he commuted his proposed ‘hire’ into an annual payment in kind (see 1 Kings v. 6, 9, 11). It would seem, therefore, that the author of Chronicles here throws into one at least two distinct messages sent by Solomon to Hiram” [Speak. Com.].

Vers. 11–16.—*Hiram's reply* (cf. 1 Kings v. 8, 9). *Loved*. “It would seem that neighbouring sovereigns, in communications with Jewish monarchs, adopted the Jewish name for the Supreme Being (Jehovah, ‘the Lord’ of our version), either identifying him with their own chief god or (sometimes) meaning merely to acknowledge him as the special god of the Jewish nation and country. In Hiram's case the acknowledgment seems to be of the former kind” [Speak. Com.]. Ver. 12. *The Lord*, a formula designating the Supreme God with several Asiatic nations. In Persian inscriptions Ormazd is constantly called “the great god, who gave (or made) heaven and earth” [Speak. Com.]. Ver. 13. *Hiram*, the king's own father's name appears to have been Abibaal. *Father* is used in the honourable sense of master, and the trans. should be as generally admitted. “I have sent a cunning man, endowed with understanding, one Hiram, my master-workman.”

Ver. 14. A Tyrian by race, whose mother was of the daughter of Dan, though her father was of Naphtali (1 Kings vii. 14), skilled in all things specified, and in wood, stone, and fine linen. Ver. 16. *Joppa*, now *Jaffa*, the natural port of Jerusalem, distant about 35 miles.

Vers. 17, 18.—*The census of strangers.* Strangers, descendants of Canaanites not driven out of the land at the invasion (Judg. i. 21-36; 1 Kings ix. 20), and non-Israelite population influx from surrounding nations. *Numbered*, reimposition of bond-service had been discontinued between Joshua and Saul. David numbered the strangers (cf. 1 Chr. xxii. 2), and Solomon imitated his father.

HOMILETICS.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.—Verses 1-16.

Solomon's wisdom given not for self-adornment and speculation, but for practical purposes; to build, govern, and do the work of God. David talked about the work, gathered materials; Solomon executed. **I. The magnitude of the work.** Wonderfully great (ver. 9). Great not so much in outward structure as in style and design. 1. *Great because God, for whom it is built, is great.* "For great is our God above all gods" (ver. 5). Infinite, self-existent, and supreme. Our ideas of God determine our plans in building up character, family, business, and places of worship. "Our theology determines our architecture," says Dr. Parker. Defective views of God will influence expenditure and worship. God is great, and should have nothing mean. 2. *Great because its worship is becoming.* "To burn sacrifice before him" (ver. 6). The spiritual always greater than the material. However magnificent the place, God is greater than the temple. A great God indicates great worship. A ritual not to please the eye and gratify the taste, but holy, sincere, and devout. 3. *Great because it satisfies great needs.* "To burn before him sweet incense, &c." (ver. 4). "Solomon seems to mean that to build a temple can only be justified on the human—not on the divine—side. 'God dwelleth not in temples made with hands,' cannot be confined to them, does in no sort need them. The sole reason for building a temple lies in the needs of man. Man is finite; his worship must be local; the sacrifices commanded in the law had, of necessity, to be offered somewhere. Only in view of these necessities did Solomon venture to think of building God a 'house'" [*Speak. Com.*]. Man will ever need incense, which sets forth prayer; the continual shew-bread, or communion with God; and the burnt-offering, or propitiation for sin (Ex. xxx. 7; Num. xxviii.; Lev. xxiii.). **II. The spirit in which the work was undertaken.** Solomon felt the necessity, urgency, and responsibility of the work. 1. *A spirit of determination.* "I purpose to build a house" (1 Kings v. 5). Energy, settled and fixed resolution in himself. Gave orders to others also to help; stirred up the nation to take an interest in work. Prayer should show itself in action and enthusiasm for God. "The truest wisdom is a resolute determination," says Napoleon. 2. *A spirit of humility.* "But who is able to build, &c.?" (ver. 6). Feeling that he was undertaking an impossible work almost. Not as a conceited king or wealthy prince, but as unworthy of the work, did he regard himself. A due sense of insufficiency becoming in the wisest and strongest; the only way to secure strength and success; will never lead to despair, but to do what can be done. "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." **III. The help which was secured in the execution of the work.** Solomon great, wise, and rich but required help from Hiram. Kings want men! Everything worthy done by co-operation, reciprocity of labour. 1. *Help readily given.* No excuse, no delay, no mere promise. Willingness combined with respect, congratulations, and gladness of the opportunity. "When Hiram heard the words of Solomon

he rejoiced greatly." 2. *Help most skilful.* Cut timber, "costly stones and hewed stones," the best that could be given. We should *contrive* more for God. Give more intelligence, more value in our service; put more cunning in the fingers, more penetration in the mind, and more polish in the brass; more beauty in every sacrifice. 3. *Help most suitable.* One thing not substituted for another; cedar-trees for gold, and silver for brass. Timber, stones, and fine linen in exact quantity and quality. Cunning men "filled with wisdom and understanding," "able to grave," to superintend and direct. Give what is suitable and required, and you will help in building the temple.

HIRAM AND SOLOMON.—Verses 2-16.

Hiram had been a friend of David, now a faster friend of Solomon, with whom he formed treaties and alliance, by which commerce was extended and peace maintained. We learn from this intercourse—I. *That friendship in life is helpful.* Hiram served both father and son; gratitude and filial loyalty bound Solomon to him. An old family friend revives touching memories; should never be forsaken, though you may rise and he may sink in the world, nor undervalued in counsels and offices of love. "Thine own friend and thy father's friend, forsake not." II. *That co-operation among men is desirable.* True friendship leads to common courtesy and co-operation. Kings not independent, friend men, and cannot build without others. Tyre may help Jerusalem, Gentile the Jew. In the cause of humanity, skilled and unskilled, overseer and common labourer, may work together. "Every man has his own kingship. Every man has something that no other man has. A recognition of this fact, and a proper use of its suggestions, would create for us a democracy hard to distinguish from a theocracy." III. *That men may know God, yet not serve him.* Hiram acknowledged the God of the Jewish people, now known among the nations, but no reason to think that he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. The doxology ("Blessed, &c.") may spring from courtesies of style, community of language, and religious tradition which existed between Phœnicians and Hebrews. Men may know much of God, speak well of him, yet withhold homage from him and give it to idols. IV. *That when God's people are consistent in their life, their influence upon others is for good.* Hiram felt more than respect for Solomon; was well-disposed, through the honour and worship rendered to God. When Israel were idolatrous, they were weakened; when holy, they influenced and instructed surrounding nations; lent, but borrowed not. Let your life be pure, and the worship of your God sincere, then you overcome opposition, touch the heart, and secure the help of strangers. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee."

NATURALISATION OF FOREIGNERS.—Verses 17, 18.

I. A good Government will tend to make a country attractive to foreigners. II. Foreigners thus attracted are amenable to the laws of the State. III. Thus protected, they may contribute materially to the enrichment of a State by the importation of foreign industries. IV. The kind treatment of exiles often repays those who so regard them. Illus.: The silk-weavers of Spitalfields. V. Be kind to strangers [*Bib. Museum*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 3-7. In opening the business temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building, because Tyrian aid on two reasons: 1. The worship was to be continued in

perpetuity, and therefore the building materials required to be of the most durable quality. 2. It must be a magnificent structure, because it was to be dedicated to the God who was greater than all gods; and, therefore, as it might seem a presumptuous idea to erect an edifice for a Being "whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain," it was explained that Solomon's object was not to build a house for him to dwell in, but a temple in which his worshippers might offer sacrifices to his honour. No language could be more humble and appropriate than this. The pious strain of sentiment was such as became a King of Israel [*Jamieson*].

Vers. 6, 7. By the sentence "the heaven and heaven of heavens," that is, the heaven in its most extended compass, "cannot contain God," Solomon strikes down all rationalistic assertions that the Israelites imagined Jehovah to be only a finite national god. The infinitude and supramundane exaltation of God cannot be more clearly and strongly expressed than it is in these words. That, however, Solomon was addicted to no abstract idealism is sufficiently apparent from this, that he unites this consciousness of the infinite exaltation of God with the firm belief of his real presence in the temple. The true God is not merely infinitely exalted above the world, has not only his throne in heaven (1 Ki. viii. 34, 36; Ps. ii. 4; xi. 4; ciii. 19; Is. lxvi. 1; Amos ix. 6), he is also present on the earth (Deut. iv. 39), has chosen the temple for the dwelling-place of his name in Israel, from which he hears the prayers of his people [*Keil*].

Ver. 7. *Send a man.* Men wanted to consecrate their skill to God and lead in Christian work, &c. *A famous son.* Hiram, the first sculptor and engraver

of Israel, was half a foreigner. His father was a Tyrian and was dead; but his mother was a Danite who lived in Naphtali (1 Ki. vii. 13, 14). He thus sprung on the Israelite side from the same tribe, and (according to Jewish tradition) from the same family as Aholiab, the Danite artist in the wilderness. So wide was his fame, and so profound the reverence entertained for him by the two sovereigns to whom he belonged, that he is called "the father," both of Solomon and of Hiram [*Stanley*]. I. A widow's son trained in his father's workshop, helping his mother, and striving to do his duty. II. This son, by diligence, faithfulness, and skill, became famous, excelled, and was promoted. III. This promotion a reward for his diligence, and a joy to his widowed mother. Industry, filial love, and perseverance sure to bring eminence. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings: he shall not stand before mean men" (Prov. xxii. 29). (Henry Martin, known in his college as "the man who had not lost an hour." Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel.)

Vers. 17, 18. *Solomon's workmen.* Builders, Israelites and heathen (Ps. xxii. 29). A prophetic anticipation of Ep. ii. 14, 19-22; iii. 4-6. *Solomon's treatment of his workmen.* Not arbitrary like Pharaoh, who would have raised discontent, if not opposition, but considerate. A wise arrangement to give rest at home and relief in labour. Hence no murmuring in work. This an example to modern builders. Learn—The temple a house of prayer for all nations. Many help in the material work of the church, who do not enjoy its worship and privileges. "We, his servants, will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER II.

Vers. 3, 4. *Friendship.* Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul! Sweet ner of life! and solder of society! [*Blair*].

Vers. 5, 6. *God above all gods.* As the human mind is finite and conceives by defining the limits of its thought, and as God is known to us to be

infinite, it is evident that the human mind can never be capable of conceiving God adequately as He is, or of defining His being [*Hodge*].

Ver. 7. *A man*. The most important point in any affair is to know what is to be done [*Columella*].

Ver. 14. *Skilful*. The mechanical genius of the Phœnicians generally, and of the Sidonians in particular, is noticed by many ancient writers [*Speak. Com.*].

CHAPTER III.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] In two chapters is narrated the building of the temple, which correspond with 1 Kings vi. and vii. Here greater fullness of description, and more precise introduction and different arrangement of things described.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Place and time of building*. *Moriah* (Gen. xxii. 2), from which was named the land of Moriah—"land of the appearing of the Lord." *Appeared*, "which was shown to David," as future site (1 Chr. xxi. 15). *Prepared*, fixed (1 Chr. xxii. 5). *Ornan*, see 2 Sam. xxiv. 18; 1 Chr. xxi. 18. Ver. 2. *Second day* not in original. Translation should be "He began to build in the second month in the fourth year of his reign" [*Speak. Com.*], about 1012 B.C.

Vers. 3-7.—*The holy house and porch*. These measures afterwards given. *Instructed*, founded (marg.), and translation should be, "Now this is the ground-plan of Solomon for the building of the house of God." *Cubits*, i.e., cubits after the old Mosaic standard. *Threescore*, only length and width given here, not height, as 1 Ki. vi. 2. Ver. 4. *Porch*, in length as breadth of the house. *Height* a difficulty. *Speak. Com.* proposes to read 20 for 120. *Overlaid* (1 Ki. vi. 22). Ver. 5. *Greater house*, i.e., the holy place or chief room of the house, double in area the holy of holies. *Ceiled*. The walls were lined with cedar, and the floor with fir, the ceiling only to be covered with fir and overlaid with gold (1 Ki. vi. 15). *Palm*, for ornaments (1 Ki. vi. 29). *Chains*, probably garlands or festoons. Ver. 6. *Garnished*, covered, or "paved the house with precious and beautiful marble" [*Kitto*]. *Stones*, gems for "its beautification" (cf. 1 Chr. xxix. 2). *Parvaim*, not found elsewhere, generally taken for a place, but uncertain what place. Ver. 7. *House*, the holy place still spoken of, the *whole* of whose beams, posts, &c., had the same decorations.

Vers. 8-14.—*The most holy house*, i.e., sanctuary or holy of holies. For its dimensions, see 1 Ki. vi. 20. *Six hundred talents*, an addition to narrative in Kings. Ver. 9. *Nails*, to fasten the gold plate on the wooden lining of the walls. *Upper chambers*, given 1 Chr. xxviii. 11; their position uncertain. Ver. 10. *Cherubim* (cf. image), moveable work; sculptured work. Original word only found here. *Vers. 11-13*. Their position described. They stood on floor, occupying each a space ten cubits in height and in width (1 Ki. vi. 23). *Wings* touched each other over the ark, and stretched across from wall to wall. *Faces* not looking at each other, like the cherubs of Moses (Ex. xxxvii. 9), but looking outward from the most holy to the holy place. Ver. 14. *Vail*, an important addition to Kings. *Blue*, exactly the same colours as that of tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 31).

Vers. 15-17.—*The pillars and their ornaments*. *High* (marg.). Long refers to distance of one from the other; height given 1 Ki. vii. 15; 2 Ki. xxv. 17; confirmed by Jer. lii. 21, 22. They appear to have stood on a line with the front of the porch; their position defined obscurely. Ver. 16. *Chains*, chaplets or festoons in the manner of the oracle, which must have had similar chain work (cf. 1 Ki. vi. 21). *Berthean* reads "in a ring," so as to go all round the neck as a necklace. Ver. 17. *Reared* before the temple, conspicuous to beholders. *Jachin*, he will establish. *Boaz*, strength. Possibly proper names, and may belong to supposed younger sons of Solomon [*Ewald*]. The LXX. trans. *direction and strength*. "Lit., Jachin would seem to be, as rendered in the margin, 'He will establish,' while Boaz may either be 'in strength,' or 'in him is strength,' or 'in it is strength.' The meaning was probably, 'God will establish in strength' (i.e., firmly) the temple and the religion connected with it" [*Speak. Com.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.—*Verses 1-14.*

This first work that Solomon undertook was long in preparation but lasting in effect. "Of all monuments of the internal administration of Solomon, none is to be compared in itself or in its effect on the future character of the people with the building of the temple. It was far more than a mere architectural display. It supplied the framework of the history of the kingdom of Judah. There is hardly any reign which is not in some way connected with its construction or its changes" [*Stanley*].

I. The site chosen. Consecrated by the offering of Isaac and the gracious appearance of the angel to David. The place selected by David, bought with his money, and prepared by his labours—pulling down buildings, levelling rocks, marking out dimensions—revealed by the Spirit of God (1 Chr. xxii. 1, 18, 26). Solomon not at liberty to fix nor at a loss to find a place. Wisdom to submit to God's appointment and to be guided by his providence.

II. The specifications given. "These are the ground plans, &c." (ver. 3). There must be foundation or ground plan—many build "in the air," build from the top, build without principles, plan, or good materials. We have need to be "instructed," not born natural architects like the bee and the beaver. In life-building keep to the "first measure," the divine rule. This the only guide, the only foundation. No other can be laid.

III. The time the work commenced. In the second month and fourth year of his reign. Time more specific in 1 Kings vi. 1. Memorable day. Many such in Christian life; not monotonous and commonplace—"red-letter days" crises in life to remind and help. The *day* when born again, when school was entered, when home was left. The *month* when business started or the Christian church entered. "The *year* after" some great event. The deliverance from Egypt, from sickness or spiritual bondage. "Days should speak" of plans formed and work commenced, of special providences and significant events.

IV. The form of the building erected. *First*, the Porch and its Pillars (vers. 15-17). "The most startling novelty of the building in which foreign architects had freest play. In materials it was probably suggested by Assyrian, in elevation by Egyptian architecture, while Tyrian sculptors displayed their art to the full in the two elaborate pillars. They stood immediately under the porch, within, but not supporting it, and were called, either from the workmen or from their own firmness and solidity, Jachin and Boaz. Their golden pedestals, bright brazen shafts, rich capitals, light festoons, were thought prodigies of art so remarkable that the Israelites were never wearied of recounting their glories" [*Stanley*].

Second, the Holy Place, "the greater house" (ver. 5), double the area of the Holy of Holies. "The whole interior was lined with boards richly decorated with carved work, clusters of foliage and flowers, among which the pomegranate and latus, or water-lily, were conspicuous, and overlaid, excepting the floor, with gold, either by gilding or in plates" (1 Ki. vi.) [*Jamieson*].

Third, the Most Holy Place. Its upper chambers (ver. 9); sculptured cherubim of colossal size, their faces inwards conformably to their use, which was to veil the ark (vers. 10-13). The veil between the Holy and the Most Holy Place (ver. 14) displayed the beauty of colour; embossed with cherubims, and made of four materials. This pattern given to Solomon (1 Chr. xxix. 11, 12), not the invention of human architects. Destitute of invention, we may gather materials and work according to pattern. But remember the builder depends upon the architect. "Except the Lord build the house, &c."

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE.

I. Solid in its form. Stones and pillars indicate strength and duration. Whatever God builds is strong and solid. The earth is "established"; the hills are "everlasting"; the church is built on a rock. "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure." **II. Costly in its materials.** Not only grand and massive in style, but costly. Best cedars, best gold, and "costly stones" (1 Ki. vii. 10). The porch, the holy place, and "the most holy house overlaid with gold." To the artistic use of precious metals was added the glory of coloured gems. "Garnished the house with precious stones for beauty" (ver. 6). **III. Beautiful in its appearance.** The temple of nature is beautiful. The sky spread out as curtains, and the stars shine as lamps. The decorations of the Temple were not a form of mere "barbaric splendour" as thought by some writers. The skill of the smith, the sculptor, and the engraver lavished upon substances and in a place rarely seen by the eye of man. In its symmetry, order, and design, the work was an offering to Jehovah, whose presence filled the temple. The house of the earthly Jerusalem was a type of the glorified Church, "the city of pure gold, like unto clear glass."

"And it is a joy that in every age
The greatest works of mind or hand have been
Done unto God" [Bailey's *Festus*].

THE SURPASSING BEAUTY OF THE TEMPLE.—Verse 6.

Observe—I. That God did not need this lavish expenditure of gold and gems and rich ornaments. They were all perishable things. II. Yet divine condescension accepted this offering of human gratitude. III. The beauty and costliness of the temple not without their uses. The temple so adorned served to impress the mind of surrounding nations with the feelings of the people of Israel towards their great God. IV. The adornment of the temple a rebuke of the utilitarian views of those who are advocates of a Judas-like economy, and who regard as waste all that is given to God beyond the bare necessities of the case [*Bib. Mus.*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 4. *Within with pure gold.* Such was Christ's inside (Col. ii. 9); in his outside was no such desirable beauty (Is. liii. 2); so the church's glory is inward (Ps. xlv. 13), in the hidden man of the heart (1 Peter iii. 4) [*Trapp*].

Ver. 5. *Gold and fir.* 1. The best things employed for God. 2. The best employed with no niggard spirit and empty hand. 3. The best applied to secure harmony, beauty, and strength.

The lofty buildings set forth "the germs of all Christian architecture and the principle of national worship in fixed places for ever."

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness."

Vers. 10-13. *Cherubims.* 1. *Image work*, painted to impress mind and life. Symbols of spiritual truths. "The eye may help the fancy and the soul; but if our creed be only painted, it is as a painted wing: you will always find it where you left it—a wing that cannot flutter, much less fly, a wing that is useless in every respect" [*Dr. Parker*]. 2. *Stood*, denoting attendance and service. "They serve who also stand and wait" (*cf.* Ps. ciii. 20). 3. *Wings* extended, to teach alacrity in service, "swift as an angel." 4. *Faces inward*, not fixed on a throne and faced towards worshippers. God only must be worshipped, not angels who merely attend and veil their faces before him.

“Whatever the cherubim were, it is certain that they were in no sense representations or emblems of deity, like the winged figures of Assyria and Egypt, with which they have been often compared . . . the representation simply expresses the claim of Jehovah, the God of Israel, of such lordship over all creation as is hymned in the seraphic song of Is. vi. 3” [Ellicott, *O. T. Com.*].

Ver. 17. *Jachin and Boaz establish-ment and strength in temple work* (cf. 1 Ki. vii. 21). “The pillars were richly decorated and placed in a very conspicuous position in front of, and detached from, the temple. The one on the dexter side was named ‘Jachin,’ that is, ‘He shall establish,’ and that on the sinister side ‘Boaz,’ that is, ‘In it is strength.’ These names seem to show that they were memorial columns, such as have often been erected in one form or another in all

ages, and that they commemorated the Lord’s work in establishing his kingdom and presence in Jerusalem. They thus expressed to future ages the thanksgiving words of David: ‘Lord, by thy favour thou hast settled strength for my mountain’ (Ps. xx. 7, marg.); ‘Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary’ (Ps. xcvi. 6)” [*J. H. Blunt*]. Showing not only by the matter—brass—but by the names of these pillars, what steadfastness the elect stand in before God, both for present and future. For present they have strength in themselves—Boaz, *i.e.*, in it is strength; for future God will so direct and establish them with his grace—Jachin, *i.e.*, he shall direct or establish, that they shall never wholly depart from him. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out” (Rev. iii. 12) [*Trapp*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER III.

Ver. 6. *Stones for beauty.* The lavish use of the precious metals in ornamentation was a peculiar feature of early Oriental architecture [*Speak. Com.*]. ‘Tis the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might [*Keats*]. *Precious stones.* They who are not made saints in a state of grace shall never be saints in glory. The stones which are appointed for that glorious temple above are hewn and polished and prepared for it here, as the stones were wrought and prepared in mountains for the building of the temple at Jerusalem [*Leighton*].

Vers. 7-10. *The mission of art.* Art is on a mission for the great common

people. It is to educate them. It is to elevate them. It is to refine them. It is to do its work now, no longer for the palace, no longer for the temple, but for that which has something of both the palace and the temple in it—for the family. Art is aiming at the household, and when it shall have done its work there, it will be with such resplendent and wondrous fruits as shall make all the past as nothing in the comparison. We are just on the eve of this great development. The wealth of the world is increasing, so that men are beginning to be able to make their houses richer than Grecian temples used to be [*Beecher*].

CHAPTER IV.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter describes the holy furniture of the temple and the court (vers. 1-10); the brass works of Hiram (vers. 11-18); and the golden vessels of the sanctuary (ver. 19; ch. v. 1; cf. 1 Ki. vii. 48-51).

Vers. 1-10.—*The furniture of the temple court.* Ver. 1. *Altar*, of burnt offering, dimensions not given in Kings. Vers. 2-5. Brazen sea (cf. 1 Ki. vii. 23-26). *Oxen*, true reading appears to be knops, colocynths, or flower buds, as in 1 Ki. vii. 24. The word seems to have come in by mistake from the next verse [*Murphy*]. Vers. 4, 5. The exact words of Kings used until last clause of ver. 5. *Lilies* (ver. 5), like a lily flower (marg.). Ver. 6. *Ten lavers* placed in the court, five on south and five on north side; used for washing utensils; sea for bathing of the priests. Ver. 7. *Candlesticks* made after the pattern of that by Moses (Ex. xxv. 31). *Form*, no allusion to shape, but to express what more fully given ver. 20. Ver. 8. *Ten tables*, one in tabernacle. Ver. 9. *Court*, inner court (2 Ki. vi. 36). *Great court* for the congregation. Ver. 10. *Sea*, great brazen sea, placed between the brazen altar and the porch, a little south (1 Ki. vii. 39), where the laver before the tabernacle formerly stood (Ex. xxx. 18).

Vers. 11-18.—*The brass works of Hiram.* *Pots*, buckets for carrying ashes from altar. *Shovels* to lift them from altar. *Basins* to receive and pour blood upon altar. Vers. 12-16. Various things (1 Ki. vii. 40-47). *Pommels*, balls on top of *chapter*, upper parts, or capital of column. *Pomegran.* (1 Ki. vii. 20). Ver. 14. *Bases* mentioned first time, ornamental stands for lavers. Ver. 16. *Father*—i.e., his master-workman, as ii. 13. Ver. 17. *Thick clay* of the ground. *Sue*, lay beyond Jordan, south of the Jabbok. *Zared.*, Zarthan. (1 Ki. vii. 46), probably name of place in time of writer. Ver. 18. *Found out*, so freely used that weight was not taken.

Vers. 19-22.—*Golden vessels of the sanctuary* (1 Ki. vii. 48-51). *Tables*, the table in Kings, perhaps the shew-bread never put on more than one of the ten at a time [*Speak Com.*]. Ver. 20. *Candlesticks*, law of burning, Ex. xxvii. 20, 21; Lev. xxiv. 2, 3. Ver. 21. *Flowers*, lamps, &c. (cf. Ex. xxv. 31-39; 1 Ki. vii. 49). Ver. 22. *Entry*, the door frame; the *doors*, the door leaves. These were overlaid with gold.

HOMILETICS.

THE FURNITURE OF THE HOLY COURT.—Verses 1-10.

A continued account of the furniture, things made of brass and of gold. Without and within types of good things to come. Here furniture in open court, in view of all the people, of great significance. 1. *The altar of brass.* Twenty cubits (30ft.) square, by ten cubits (15ft.) high. Larger than that in Tabernacle. Israel more numerous and richer, should be more devout. When God enlarges our borders and business we should increase our gifts. The burnt offerings an impressive, instructive sight, before the people in the court. 2. *The sea of brass.* For the same purpose as the Laver in Tabernacle, washing hands and feet of priests while ministering at the altar. Ten cubits (15ft.) in diameter, by five cubits (7½ft.) in height, and raised higher by standing upon 12 brazen oxen. Reminding that God requires sanctity in all that approach him. Those that draw nigh must cleanse their hands and purify their hearts (Jas. iv. 8). 3. *The ten lavers* (ver. 6). They were set upon wheels to move about, and used for the ablution of sacrifices. Not only the priests, but the sacrifices must be washed. We must purify our persons and performances. Iniquity cleaves to our holy things. 4. *The ten golden candlesticks* (ver. 7). Only one in Tabernacle. Light increases. Divine direction was given to increase the number of tables for shew-bread and candlesticks for light. 5. *The ten tables.* "Five on right side and

five on the left ;" to which belonged 100 basins or dishes of gold (ver. 7). 6. *The golden altar*, on which incense was burnt (ver. 19) ; probably enlarged in proportion to the brazen altar. Christ makes atonement and intercedes for ever in virtue of that atonement. But *what use* all this splendid furniture? Not for mere display, but utility. Talents, education, the furniture of mind not given for mere polish, but practical use. Outward adornment, material grandeur only of service when leading to spiritual results.

THE MOLTEN SEA.—Verses 2-5.

I. Its use suggests purification for God's service. Priests and people unfit without this. Holiness becomes God's house and God's servants. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." **II. Its size** suggests abundant provision for purification. Not a laver, but a sea ; kept full and overflowing for constant use. A type of that "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." **III. Its construction.** 1. The material precious and durable. 2. The oxen, sacrifices of priests, emblems of strength and patience—looking all ways. The blessings procured by a holy priesthood would be universally diffused [*Adapted*].

THE BRASS WORKS OF HIRAM.—Verses 11-18.

A detailed enumeration of principal articles executed for sacred edifice (*cf.* 1 Ki. vii. 14-46). **I. The articles which Hiram made.** Hiram skilled in work in gold, silver, and iron ; in wood and stone ; in purple, blue, fine linen and in crimson (2 Chr. ii. 14) ; but chiefly metal work or works in brass contributed. Works splendid in material, "bright brass" (1 Ki. vii. 45) ; numerous in quantity, "in great abundance" (ver. 18), and suitable in style. **II. The foundry at which they were prepared.** In neighbourhood of Succoth and Zarthan, in valley of Jordan, where the soil is marl. What natural abundant provision for man in the earth ! If brass or bronze was not smelted and alloyed by Hiram, but received from Syria as a tribute in manufactured form, yet he would melt it down for casting (1 Chr. xviii. 8). Furnaces would be required and filled with metal. Moulds made in the ground and national foundry erected far from the capital, which would not be annoyed by smoke and noxious vapours. Thus we have civilisation in its beginning, progress, and end.

AN ANCIENT CONTRACT.—Verses 11-18.

"Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon" (ver. 11). The agreement in 2 Chr. xi. **I. The contractor.** An eminent Tyrian artizan, skilled in great variety of departments ; appointed for his great natural ability to superintend the execution of all works of art in the temple ; and a faithful, diligent man, worthy of all confidence. **II. The articles for which he contracted.** Numerous and most valuable, well-finished and most suitable. The best material and the best workmanship. **III. The completion of the contract.** "He made an end of doing all the work" (1 Ki. vii. 41). Finished the work and *all* the work. No breach of contract ; no delay. Everything completed in time ; gave satisfaction ; and becomes a model transaction.

"THE ENTRY OF THE HOUSE."—Verse 22.

This central, conspicuous, and attractive, suggesting—**I. Access to God in Christian worship.** God great and man sinful. The door might have been for ever closed ; but, in love, Jehovah directs in building a house, promises

to dwell in it, and invites men to meet him there. "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." **II. Access to symbolic beauty in Christian worship.** Perfection of *gold*, or material prosperity given to God. *Palms* indicating growth and fruitfulness in Christian life; *flowers*, emblems of beauty and fragrance in Christian character; *cherubims*, suggestive of alacrity in God's service. Thought is expressed in forms of art. Beauty pleases the senses, originates in the mind the ideal, calls imagination into play, and exercises wonderful fascination over man. Delight, love, and reverence touch the heart, emotions arise and action result.

"We live by admiration, hope, and love;
And even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 6. *Ten lavers*. *Ten* symbol of completeness. Their *position* in court, five on the north, and five on south side. Their *use* for washing parts of offering. Furniture of splendid skill, labour, and expense.

Ver. 5. *With powers of lilies*, lit. like a *lily flower*. Consider—1. That there is an acceptableness in a good and true work in itself, but much more by relation; that is, when it is rendered as to God. We must come to do our best, because we are doing it for the Lord. 2. The soundness and honesty of service in God's spiritual temple. 3. As some of Hiram's work was "lily work" (cf. 1 Ki. vii. 22), so, majesty crowned

with gracefulness will be found in all the Divinest thoughts. 1. The pillars must be before the florid ornamentation; 2. But beauty is also in God's sanctuary, and "upon the top of the pillars was lily work" [*G. J. Proctor*]. In reviewing the whole chapter, we learn—1. The beautiful in Christian architecture; the temple an example and stimulus. 2. Art in Christian service; subservient to man's highest needs and God's glory. 3. The symbolic in Christian worship. The O. T. dispensation a picture adapted to infant minds and first stages of divine instruction, "a shadow (dim sketch) of things to come" (Col. ii. 17; Heb. x. 1).

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 14. *Bases and lavers*. No heathen parallel to these bases and lavers; the whole arrangement, so full of meaning, appears quite peculiar to the Israelitish temple, for nothing of the kind is found anywhere else, either on Egyptian or Assyrian monuments [*Thénius*].

Vers. 19-22. *Gold*. *Symbolic art*. It is an incarnation of fancy, and is a sort of petrified poetry, or concrete rhetoric. It is the blossom of the art-tree, whose root is thought, and whose trunk is imagination. It is inventive, imitative, and composite. . . . Let our students follow nature boldly and

lovingly, but not servilely—learning to compose as she does—not following her laws without laying down his own. Above all, let him remember that ornamentation is to art what words are to thought, and that if design and architecture are dead, no ornamentation, however beautiful, can give them life. It will be, at the best, but a wreath of flowers round the pale brow of the corpse.

"O powers
Illimitable! 'tis but the outer hem
Of God's great mantle our poor stars do
gem"

[*Ruskin*].

CHAPTER V.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Removal of the ark (vers. 1-10) is followed by visible token of God's favour (vers. 11-14) (*cf.* 1 Ki. viii. 1-11), an addition to narrative in Kings, is the account of the circumstances under which the manifestation took place.

Vers. 1-10.—The ark removed. Dedicated (1 Chr. xxii. 14; xxvi. 26). *Ver. 2. Assembled*, the elders in the *feast* of tabernacles, which began on 15th of Ethanim, the seventh month (1 Ki. viii. 2). The closing festival of the sacred year. *Ver. 4. Levites*, such as were priests, whose office in particular to bear ark (1 Ki. viii. 3). *Ver. 5. Tabernacle* brought from Gibeon (2 Chr. i. 3). *Ver. 6. Sacrificed* through the priests. *Told*, counted (1 Ki. viii. 5). *Ver. 7. Wings*, those which met in the middle of the room. *Ver. 8. Covered*, shaded. *Ver. 9. Drew out*, intimating that the ark was not to be moved again. They rested in the outer wings, so made a barrier. *This day, i.e.*, the time this history was written. After Babylonish captivity, no trace of ark or staves. *Ver. 10. Nothing.* Hence tables of the law put into the ark by Moses (Deut. x. 5) existed in time of Solomon.

Vers. 11-14.—God's glory manifested. Priests without regard to courses; all priests at hand took part in ceremony. *Ver. 12. Singers*, full choir required on solemn occasions like this; all twenty-four choirs combined in *white linen* (*cf.* 1 Chr. xv. 27), with instruments proper for the Levites, and *trumpets* for priests (*cf.* Num. x. 8; 1 Chr. xv. 24; xvi. 6; 2 Chr. vii. 6; xiii. 12-14). *Ver. 13. One.* The performance arranged as one whole. The song of praise usual refrain (1 Chr. xvi. 34; Ps. cxxxvi.). *Cloud* as in erection of tabernacle (Ex. xl. 34), the symbol of Divine presence, too dazzling for them to officiate.

HOMILETICS.

DEDICATED THINGS.—Verse 1.

This incident worthy of note, something to be commended, thought the writer. The treasures of David carefully stored into the chambers of the temple. **I. David before his death dedicated certain treasures to God.** With toil, self-sacrifice, and entire devotedness, David collected materials. "In my trouble I have prepared, &c." (1 Chr. xxii. 14). His spoils and property consecrated to the highest uses. The gold of the heathen may enrich the coffers of the Son of God. **II. Solomon most scrupulous in carrying out his father's wish.** He might have taken them for the expenses of his house and government. As executor he willingly appropriated all to its lawful use. Nothing was alienated. The will was felt to bind and fulfilled. Frequently the wishes of pious parents are evaded by worldly-minded relatives. The manner important and specific. *Thus* (ver. 1; *cf.* 1 Ki. viii. 51, so ended, &c.)—1. Resolving to secure the blessing by fulfilling the conditions. 2. Anxious to bestow upon the people the best blessings. 3. Continuing the work until completely finished. **III. Solomon's example worthy of our imitation.** Treasures we can give—hearts, personal efforts, contributions and attendance, obedience to the Divine will, and prayer for the Divine presence.

THE REMOVAL OF THE ARK.—Verses 2-10.

Along with holy vessels, needful to bring in the ark, the most precious furniture. The occasion one of great interest and solemnity. **I. The time of its removal.** 1. *Remarkable in itself.* The building finished in the month Bul (November), eighth of the year, eleventh of Solomon's reign (B.C. 1005-4), having

occupied workmen seven years and a half (1 Ki. vi. 1, 37, 38). Dedication began in seventh month of the year Ethanim (October), not the same year in which completed. Intervening eleven months spent in getting ready; delay to choose fit time when Jerusalem would be filled with people. Feast of Tabernacles most suitable season to dedicate temple. 2. *Remarkable in its influence.* "The magnitude of the event is marked by the fact that now, for the first time since the exodus, we have the years and months recorded" [Stanley]. Events often fix dates in life. "I have shewed thee new things from this time." **II. The method of its removal.** Similar to the ceremony of removing from house of Obedom to Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12; 1 Chr. xv. 25). 1. *Representatives of the nation summoned to take part.* Heads of tribes, chiefs of the fathers, senators, judges, and rulers. 2. *Vast spectators met together.* "All the men of Israel assembled themselves" (ver. 3). Not only chief men, those invited, but vast numbers of common people to watch the ceremony. 3. *An orderly procession was formed.* The king, preceded by his royal guard (1 Ki. xiv. 27, 28), took the lead; elders of the people followed; then came the Levites bearing the ark. This procession was joined by another on Mount Zion from lofty height of Gibeon, "bearing with it the relics of the old pastoral worship, now to be disused for ever" (ver. 5). Levite choirs sang joyous psalms (the Psalms of Degrees cxx.—cxciv.), in solemn steps, accompanied with cymbals, psalteries, harps, and trumpets. Up the hill the procession went, and in nearing Moriah they would sing, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength." **III. The ceremonies which accompanied its removal.** Everything fit for a great and solemn event like this. 1. *Innumerable sacrifices offered.* Stationed in different places, priests offered "sheep and oxen which could not be numbered for multitude" (ver. 6). "The ground was moist with drink-offerings and sacrifices," says Josephus. 2. *Priests attended in a body.* This an extraordinary occasion, more than wanted solemnity. All priests came up from all parts of Judaea to take part. "All the priests that were present (found) were sanctified and did not then wait by course" (ver. 11). 3. *Musicians orderly arranged.* The station of priests with instruments at marble table on the south-west of the altar apart from others. Levite singers occupied an orchestra east of the altar. Both stood with their faces to the altar. The new and gentler notes of David's music blended with the loud trumpet blast of earlier days in praising God, "for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." **IV. The solemn deposit in its resting-place.** Brought into its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims (1 Ki. viii. 6). "There it is unto this day" (ver. 9). 1. *Its public inspection.* "Before the ark disappeared for the last time from the eyes of the people, the awful reverence which had kept any inquisitive eyes from prying into the secrets of that sacred chest gave way before the united feelings of necessity and of irresistible curiosity. The ancient lid formed by the cherubs was to be removed; and a new one without them was to be substituted, to fit it for its new abode. It was taken off, and in so doing the interior of the ark was seen by Israelite eyes for the first time for more than four centuries, perhaps the last time for ever" [Stanley]. 2. *Its careful seclusion.* Put into "the place of its rest" (Ps. cxxxii. 8-14), in token that its wanderings were over—that God had given rest to the Levites and privilege to minister in fixed service; a final pledge of God's presence with his people in their new capital. God present in religious assemblies. "Lo, I am with you always."

THE JOY OF FINISHED WORK.

I. The accomplishment of a good work is the cause of joy.
The building of the first and second temple, the establishment of national

government and the acquisition of national liberty, the rearing of great monuments and the opening of places of worship, &c. 1. *Joy to the builder.* Solomon rejoiced that no accident delayed, that no providence prevented the erection of the temple. 2. *Joy to the nation.* The people rejoiced; all classes represented, and shared in the consecration. Sacrifice and cymbal; king, princes, and people united in praise to God, "who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him." **II. The power to accomplish this work should be ascribed to God.** Not to the skill of the architect, the labour of the builders, the wealth of the contributors, but to God. Genius to invent, material, gold, and silver, to give all from him. We return simply what we receive. "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." **III. Hence, in every great undertaking we should ask for God's direction.** In building ask for a site, materials, and workmen, for time to finish, and privilege to consecrate. "All the works of this pattern," only from the Divine Architect. If enterprises, social and national, succeed, wisdom from above must guide. In building a family and a business, if the foundations be laid in oppression (Hab. ii. 11, 12), and the materials be gathered and put together in pride and forgetfulness of God, the erection may fall, and great may be the fall. The best-laid project fails unless God crown it with success. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

THE TEMPLE CHOIR.—*Verses 12, 13.*

A full choir on this occasion. *Levites*, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, their proper instruments; and *priests* with trumpets. **I. Music a revelation from God.** Music of a certain kind in nature—"the notes of birds," "the music of the spheres," &c. But sounds not music until reduced to scale; not a hymn of praise until formed by the mind of man, taught by the help of God, to awaken emotions. "There is no fuller revelation of God in nature than is found in these laws of sound, by which he comes into the very heart of man, even to its inmost recesses of love and adoration; and it requires only a sensitive, child-like heart to interpret this speechless music locked within nature as the voice of God pleading to be let out into music, and praise through the heart of man, for so only can his works praise him" [*Munger*]. **II. Music as a science to cultivate.** Materials and laws of music in nature must be reduced to harmony, and made the vehicle of thought and feeling. Musicians described as workmen, a guild of sacred minstrels who labour and study to perfect their art (1 Chr. xxv. 1). 1. *Some may lead.* Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthem "set over service of song." Leaders required to train and conduct. 2. *All may learn.* Voice given to cultivate. Members of the choir and the congregation may practise singing. All should feel that sacred music pleads for better use and nobler exercise. **III. Music consecrated to its highest use in the worship of God.** The temple the great school of music, which was consecrated to worship of Jehovah, hence "songs of the temple" (Amos viii. 3). Nothing calls for music like religion. It may be left out of other departments of life, but religious worship would suffer without music. Where praise is repressed for the sake of the sermon the service will become dull and unprofitable. Cease to sing, and men will forget to assemble. Music takes to itself the noblest instruments, attunes and inspires the greatest composers, and becomes the expression of the greatest reverence, adoration, and praise in the house of God. The heart has lost its sadness, atheists have wept, and men been brought to God under the influence of song. "Both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord."

THE CLOUD FILLING THE TEMPLE.—*Verses 11–14.*

I. As a confirmation of acceptance. By this God approved of Solomon's work, honoured the ark and accepted the temple. Priests drew back in holy dread. Sinful man cannot approach the glory of God, who is like a consuming fire. But God condescends to meet him, to hear prayer and restore to friendship. **II. As a distinguishing feature of the Jewish from other nations.** Heathen nations had temples, but gods without glory. No manifestation like that of Jehovah ever seen by them. This cloud a striking testimony that God took the nation under His care and protection. The glory, stability, and attractive force of any people is to have God with them. "For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" **III. As a symbol of permanent habitation.** After the dedication the visible sign withdrawn, but God constantly dwelt in the temple. Only driven out when polluted by manifold idolatry (Ezek. x. 4–18). His return in the Messiah greater than in the magnificence of temple. **IV. A consecrating element in all sacred buildings.** Not until the glory fills the Christian church, the human heart, and the plans of life, will they become fit for God. "Let this be a lesson to all church builders. Your painted windows, and gilded columns, and majestic roofs are nothing until the living Spirit comes into the sanctuary, fills it with an illuminating presence. The house is built for God, and until God comes it is but a structure of calculated matter; when he comes every stone glows and every corner of the house becomes a sacred refuge, and the whole temple becomes as it were a part of heaven" [*Dr. Parker*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Bring up the ark.* Why this display and ceremony? 1. The ark the chief thing in the temple. The temple without the ark like the Church without a Bible, the universe without a sun. 2. The ark in the temple significant of God's desire to be reconciled to man, to dwell with his people and not be separated from them. 3. The temple, therefore, nothing until consecrated by the ark. The same with aspects and departments of human life. Men, places, and abilities nothing until utilised for good. How many empty places and unfulfilled plans and prophecies of life!

Ver. 9. *There it is.* Things that remain. 1. Sin and misery remain—cannot be ignored or explained away. 2. Redemption in Christ remains—may be enjoyed and offered to all. 3. Religious ordinances remain—the Bible, the Sabbath, and privileges of God's house. There they are, lodged with us, tokens of God's favour and presence committed unto us to enjoy

and commend to others (2 Tim. i. 13, 14).

Vers. 12, 13. *Singers.* 1. *In beautiful attire.* "Arrayed in white linen"—the symbol of purity, beauty, and splendour. "White is everywhere," says one, "the livery and colour of heaven." 2. *With various instruments.* Stringed and unstringed, all forms and all ministries, may be employed in God's service. 3. *With marvellous wisdom.* All the twenty-four choirs combined into one grand choir. Singing and playing arranged to form one whole, "to make one sound" in praising the Lord. Such strains fit type of heaven and of the everlasting life of glorified spirits. A life of melody, love, and order in themselves. A life in harmony with each other and with God. 4. *The theme of their song.* The goodness and mercy of the Lord. "He is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." The song of the redeemed in heaven.

Ver. 13. *The cloud.* 1. *A type of Old Testament dispensation.* Rites and

ceremonies, types and shadows. "He made darkness his secret place." 2. *The present mode of viewing God.* Can only know and see God through a cloud "darkly." The clearest conceptions dark; the greatest capacity limited. None can find out God by searching. "The symbol clearly implies a revelation of divine glory, as it is seen, not

in the unveiled brightness of heaven, but in the glorious cloud of mystery, through which it must always be seen on earth, and which indeed is all that the eye of man can bear to contemplate. Out of that glory comes the only revelation which can be destined to man—the voice or word of the Lord (Deut. iv. 12)" [*Ellicott's O. T. Com.*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1. *Finished.* There are some buildings that are never finished. We never finish our life building; the life temple goes up evermore. Let every man take heed how he buildeth. Do not suppose that you finish your education. In the higher education you only finish that you may begin; you close one book as a pledge of your qualification to open another. There is always a higher aspect of things to apprehend and apply [*Dr. Parker*].

Vers. 12, 13. *Singers and harps.* Theology and music unite and move on, hand in hand, through time, and will continue eternally to illustrate,

embellish, enforce, impress, and fix in the attentive mind the grand and important truths of Christianity [*Andrew Law, "Essay on Music"*]. Man did not make the laws of music; he has only found them out, and if he be self-willed and break them, there is an end of music instantly; all he brings out is discord and ugly sounds [*Chas. Kingsley*].

"God is its author and not man; he laid
The key-note of all harmonies; he
plann'd
All perfect combinations; and he made
Us so that we could hear and understand."

CHAPTER VI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Close parallelism of this chapter and 1 Kings viii, 12-50; ver. 13 only important variation.

Ver. 1 (cf. Lev. xvi. 1), *darkness*, not cloud, but of holy of holies, into which cloud entered. Vers. 3-11.—*Solomon's address to people.* *Face*, from looking towards the temple. *Congregation*, men, women, and children. *Blessed*, offered blessings probably in form of Num. vi. 23-25. Ver. 4. *Spake* (2 Sam. vii.). Ver. 5. *Chose* until David's time. Vers. 10, 11. The promise is fulfilled.

Vers. 12-42.—*Solomon's prayer.* *Before*, eastward of it, with face towards temple, as speaking for the people. Ver. 13. *Scaffold*, brazen platform. *Kneeled*, in solemn posture. The prayer sublime and orderly in arrangements. Ver. 15. *Preface*; then three petitions. *First*, perpetuate the line of David. Ver. 16. *Keep good* the promise. *Second*, regard the house where name is put. *Thy word* (1 Chr. xvii. 9-12). Ver. 18. A conception of God's condescension not limited to the temple. Ver. 19. *Prayer*, next verse. Ver. 21. *Third petition.* *Forgive* in general, not limited sense.

We have now seven different cases in which Israel turns to the temple in prayer. *1st case.* A man wronged by his neighbour (vers. 22, 23). *Oath* of self-purgation usual when no witnesses. *Requitting*, returning equivalent. Do justice to the innocent. *2nd case.* When worsted by the enemy (vers. 24, 25). *Worse* in defensive war (Josh. vii. 5). Defeated on account of sin. *Hear* when they repent. *3rd case.* Suffering from drought (vers. 26, 27). *Rain*, heavens like a storehouse, may be shut up (1 Ki. viii. 35) when

good way forsaken. *4th case.* Visitation by death or any other calamity (vers. 28-31). Seven kinds of affliction. *Dearth*, scarcity from other causes than rain. *Pestilence*, which often sweeps over Eastern lands. *Blasting*, various forms of danger in crops (Deut. xxviii. 22). *Locusts* (Deut. xxviii. 38). *Enemies in gates*, none therefore able to go in or come out. *Plagues*, sore or sickness of every kind, recognised as Divine chastisement. *5th case.* The stranger coming to pray (vers. 32, 33). *As thy people* (ver. 33). Rights and privileges of Israel thrown open to all. *May know, godly fear* in O.T. the foundation of piety; the temple the only place where God is worshipped. *6th case.* Aggressive war undertaken by Divine permission (vers. 34, 35). Prayer for God to maintain their cause. *7th case.* If in captivity (vers. 36-39). If captives in war, on account of sin. *Bethink*, reflect, "bring back their heart" (marg.). Consider seriously exact words of Deut. xxx. 1-3, then hear and forgive. *Conclusion.*—Vers. 40-42 wanting in Kings. *Arise*, words spoken probably when ark was brought into Jerusalem (cf. Ps. cxxxii. 8-10). *Resting-place*, Holy of Holies. *Turn not, i.e.*, reject his prayer and cause him to be ashamed. *Mercies* towards David (Ps. lxxxix. 2).

HOMILETICS.

THE TEMPLE THE FIXED DWELLING-PLACE OF GOD.—Verses 1-10.

To reassure priests and people, Solomon reminded them that the cloud, instead of being a sign of evil, was the fulfilment of promise. "The Lord hath said," if not in express words yet by continual course of action, "that he would dwell, &c." Hence a token of approval, a method of taking possession of the house, and this prayer a petition that God would for ever keep possession. **I. The temple now a fixed residence for God.** "A settled place for thee." **1. In opposition to the tabernacle.** Which was temporary and provisional. *A tent*, a mutable and fragile dwelling; but *a house* of stone and cedar, durable and solid. **2. As required by the circumstances of God's people.** The dispensation made a fixed place needful. Man required locality, visible signs, and special adaptations. Now not a question of *place*, but of *being*; not in Jerusalem nor Mount Gerizim. God is *spirit* and worshipped not by material representation, nor ritual, but by the heart, *the spirit* of man. Not hands, not wood and stone, but living souls must become God's abode. **II. The temple as a fixed residence built in fulfilment of God's promise.** "God hath fulfilled that which he spake" (ver. 4). **1. A promise made to David.** Reference to 2 Sam. vii. 11-14, where is promised that David's dynasty should continue for ever, and David's son should build a house. Thus the promise established the royal house by its connection with the royal seed. "I will set up thy seed after thee." **2. A promise fulfilled in Solomon.** "I am risen up in the room of my father" (ver. 20). Not in pride, as Ahasuerus made his feast and Nebuchadnezzar built his city; but in a spirit of gratitude Solomon built the temple and finished his father's work. Traced the providence of God, and urged the people to praise him. **III. The design of this fixed residence to perpetuate the presence of God.** The temple a permanent centre of worship to Jehovah. Neither city for worship, nor king to govern chosen before David's time. Now God has chosen a residence and purposed to abide in it for ever. "This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever" (Ps. lxxxviii. 16). Hence God accessible, Zion secure and communion attractive and blessed. "God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (literally a high place for shelter and defence, Ps. xlvi. 7-11; Prov. xviii. 10) (Ps. xlviii. 3).

THE PERFORMANCE OF GOD'S PROMISE.—Verses 4-11.

God had made good one part of his promise, Solomon prays that he would perform the other. Concludes, as he began, with thankful acknowledgment of

Divine goodness in performance of promise. **I. That God deals with his people in all ages by way of promise.** With Adam, Abraham, and David. Throughout the O. and N. T. dispensation, with individuals and nations we have promise after promise. "Exceeding great and precious promises," to encourage and help. Here we have—1. *Promise to build a house.* 2. *Promise to raise up a king.* **II. That the performance of this promise is a source of joy to God's people.** 1. *In revealing God to them.* God never compelled to act; enters into engagements and covenants with perfect freedom; and never reluctant to bestow what is promised. Hence the goodness and grace in giving the word, and the veracity, power, and providence in its fulfilment. God may be trusted, for "He cannot deny himself." In this the true God stands contrasted with the "lying vanities" of heathen deities and weak, sinful man. "He is not man that he should lie, &c." 2. *In the actual bestowment of good to them.* Providence on their behalf; power exercised for their deliverance, and actual fulfilment in their history and experience. The covenant kept and mercy bestowed (ver. 14). "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." **III. That there are special seasons to testify to God's goodness in the performance of his promise.** "As it is this day" (ver. 15). In conversion, restoration from sickness and danger; in dedication of places of worship and in times of special favour, we may testify to God's mercy and truth. Numerous are the occasions in which we may "abundantly utter (lit. bubble forth as from a fountain) the memory of his great goodness and sing (lit. with loud eulogies) of his righteousness" (Ps. cxlv. 7).

INVOCATION OF DIVINE FAVOURS.—*Verses 11-24.*

Solomon had dedicated the temple, now offered the consecration prayer to God. "He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of Oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchanged the usual standing posture of prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in Eastern worship at the present day in moments of deep humiliation. The prayer itself is one of unprecedented length, and is remarkable as combining the conception of the infinity of the Divine Presence with the hope that the Divine mercies will be drawn down on the nation by the concentration of the national devotions, and even of the devotion of foreign nations, towards this fixed locality" [*Stanley*]. Learn—**I. That God is infinitely great.** "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee" (ver. 18). To be infinite is literally to be unbounded, unlimited. This includes omnipresence and incomprehensibility. His immensity extends infinitely beyond the boundaries of space. God fills heaven, earth, and hell. No place, no temple contains him as a house is built for man. He was not confined to the Jewish people, nor "chiefly to the narrow bounds of the Jewish land," as some think; not a mere "God of the hills," a patial or Gentile Deity. His settled abode is eternity, "*inhabiteth eternity.*" "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 24). "Where is the house that ye built unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" **II. That God is infinitely faithful.** "Kept that thou promisedst" (ver. 15). The truth of God makes it impossible for him not to fulfil whatever he hath spoken. He is "the faithful God" (Deut. vii. 9). "It is impossible for God to lie." Performance of threatening and promise not impracticable. God not liable to forget nor to change. We may be persuaded that "there shall not fail one good word of all that the Lord our God hath spoken." **III. That God is infinitely good.** This attribute may be termed the *glory* of God. Moses desired to see the *glory* of

Jehovah; the answer was, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee." In this narrative goodness is distinguished by different names, and exercised in different ways. "Goodness is the *genus* that comprehends mercy, grace, long-suffering, kindness, and truth in it; these are branches from that as the root" [*Goodwin* on Ex. xxxiii. 19]. 1. *In answering prayer.* Heathen gods had eyes, but could see not; ears, but could hear not. God is accessible, has not hid himself from men, nor retired into the bosom of eternity. "O thou that hearest prayer," "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place." 2. *In dwelling with men.* In the hearts of those who love him, and walk before him in daily life. In the temple with those who worship him in sincerity and truth. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." "I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." 3. *In the bestowment of mercy.* "And shewest mercy" (ver. 14). *Mercy* suggests *misery* (Latin *miseria*), wretchedness. God relieves in distress, confers favours on undeserving, forbears to punish, and bestows innumerable favours. "Thou art good, and doest good."

THE SOLEMN QUESTION.—*Verse 18.*

Will God dwell with man? The question of all ages, the dream, the desire of humanity. Irrepressible anticipations in the deification of heroic men, the incarnations of Hindoo gods, and in the Messianic hope of the Jews. **I. Where the answer?** Not in *ancient philosophy*, even with its moral teachings and intense longings. No God for the poor and illiterate, only for noble and learned if for any class. God was thought too great to regard man. Not in *modern philosophy*. Ungodly science substitutes some abstract principle, "Infinite Wisdom," "the Ruling Principle of the Universe," or talks of "law" and "omnipotent power." God is not a living personal God, accessible to man, and willing to dwell with him. **II. What saith the Scripture?** Manifestations of God in O.T. symbols in tabernacle and temple. Promises in abundance, not merely to *sojourn* as a stranger, to tarry for a night (Jer. xiv. 8), but to *settle* in fixed residence among men. "There shall be a place which the Lord God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there" (Deut. xii. 11). "The hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever" (Ps. lxxviii. 16). "I will dwell in the midst of them for ever" (Ezek. xliii. 9). God with men in Christian worship; in the incarnation of Christ, "God manifest in the flesh;" in the human heart by his Holy Spirit; in heaven by special presence.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 6-8. *Davi's intention to build the temple.* 1. Man's purposes are sometimes greater than his power. Limitations of—1. Character. 2. Body. 3. Culture. 4. Circumstances—want of means or liberty. 5. Destiny. 6. Life. 11. The importance and value of these gracious but unfulfilled intentions. Earnest purposes, sincere desires, are facts, and as facts will be recompensed. 1. They are facts to God. 2. They are facts to those who cherish them. 3. Unfulfilled intentions are not without their practical influence upon society.

III. The comfort which these considerations are calculated to afford. This theme is full of comfort to—1. The poor and uneducated. 2. The suffering. 3. Those who are called to premature death. 4. All good men in the presence of their imperfect lives [*W. L. Watkinson*].

Ver. 10. *In the room of my father.* 1. A succession of *men*. Joshua after Moses; Solomon after David. 2. A succession of *office*. To some high responsibility—priesthood, government—by election, by hereditary descent.

No mere form to fill the same place and be surrounded by the very circumstances and associations which inspired our predecessors. "He took up the mantle of Elijah." 3. A succession of work. Work should be carried on and finished, if possible, by those called to it. Thus ideas, liberties, and institutions are handed down from generation to generation. Thus have we the true continuity of the Christian church, the true communion of saints, and the true identity of man's life with God's work.

Vers. 15, 16. The stability and perpetuity of the Davidic throne, the sonship of the Davidic King, and the consequent heirship of all nations (*cf.* 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14).

Vers. 14, 15. "*Lord God of Israel.*" This was a worthy precedent for princes, who, if they would imitate Solomon in devotion, might likewise share with him in blessing. This is a long prayer and full of affection to the end. So to pray is hard and happy. It is a precedential prayer, as one calleth it. *Kept with thy servant David.* We may pray to good purpose though in the self-same words as before. Christ himself did so in his agony, when he prayed most earnestly. Let this comfort those who complain that they cannot vary their petitions" [*Trapp*]. *Be verified*, v. 17. He reiterateth and reinforceth his former request; this evinceth his holy importunity. This he learned of his father (*cf.* Prov. iv. 4) [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 18. *Will God, &c.?* The great contrast—1. Between the heaven of heavens and the material temple. 2. Between the infinite grandeur of God

and the unworthiness of man (creature and sinful creature). 3. The deep humility which this contrast should create in our approach to God.

"The more thy glories strike mine eye
The humbler I shall lie," &c.

Vers. 18–21. *The Sanctity of God's House.* 1. As the residence of a great God. 2. As the house of prayer. 3. As the place consecrated to worship. God's name there. The centre and core of all fellowship,

Vers. 12–21. *Solomon's Prayer.* 1. Position from whence offered. *Stood* on scaffold where he could be seen and heard. 2. Solomon's attitude. Reverent, *kneeled*; expectant, "*spread forth his hands.*" Looked up to heaven in dependence; *kneeled* in humility. "*Kneeling never spoiled silk stockings*" [*Herbert*]. 3. Its length. Longest recorded in Scripture. 4. Its spirit. Hopeful on the ground of fulfilled promise; humble on account of unworthiness. 5. Its language. Beautiful and scriptural. 6. Its purpose. That God would fulfil the remainder of his promise. That God would regard and honour the temple, by watching over its interests, dwelling in its courts, answering prayers and pardoning sins. "*Hear thou to thy dwelling-place in heaven*"—a pregnant expression for, hear the prayer which ascends or is sent to thy dwelling place, to heaven. The last words, "hear and forgive," are to be left in their generality, and not to be limited by any complement. Forgiveness of sins alone can remove the curse which transgression draws after it" [*Keil*].

HOMILETICS.

JUSTICE EXECUTED.—Verses 22, 23.

The first specific case of petition is doubtful. A man has sustained injury and charges a suspected person, though not able to prove the fact. Petition that false oath may not be taken; but that the innocent may be discovered, and the guilty punished. **I. The injury charged.** A "trespass against his neighbour." If goods or money to be kept be lost; cattle to have died, driven away, or injured (Ex. xxii. 7–9); if any one over-reached another (Lev. v. 21–25), be suspected of theft, fraud, and wilful damage, he might be sued at

law to make oath of integrity. **II. The solemn appeal made.** Punishment could only be made after discovery of guilty person. 1. *An oath was made by accused.* Witnesses could not be found. Dispute or difference to be settled by oath of accused. Hence party brought before the altar to swear in all due solemnity. 2. *God appealed to.* "Hear thou from heaven." Many false oaths might be taken and guilty escape, who then could justify the innocent? God above sees all, hears all, and never errs. This appeal accords with our instinct of justice and revelations of Scripture. "The works of his hands are verity and judgment."

NATIONAL DISASTER.—Verses 24, 25.

Worsted by enemy making inroads upon them, defeating them as predicted (Lev. xxvi. 3-7; Deut. xxviii. 15-25). **I. Sin is the cause of national reverses.** "Because they have sinned against thee." Forgetting, forsaking, denying God, creating displeasure by neglecting his worship and becoming idolatrous. **II. Forsaking sin may ward off national reverses.** Judgments bring to penitence, and those that slight God often solicit his mercy. "In their affliction they will seek me early." 1. *With earnest prayer.* "Pray and make supplication." Afflictions remind of neglected duties, and kill corruptions bred by prosperity. 2. *With humble confession.* "And confess thy name." This opposed to forgetting, extenuating, or denying sins. They must be acknowledged, not in cold, formal expression; but with deep, humble, and sincere penitence. 3. *With practical amendment.* "Shall turn again to thee." There is utter renunciation, abandonment. The wicked man "forsakes his way." Then comes mercy, restoration, and new life. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth them and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

PERILS TO AGRICULTURE.—Verses 26-31.

Various plagues dangerous to growing crops. Grain blasted, cities besieged, and sickness of every kind upon transgressors themselves. Hence we have—**I. A rebuke to rationalism in natural evils.** Mildew and caterpillars, with their terrible ravages, traceable by modern science to natural causes. But who originated the causes, laws, or conditions? All meteorological phenomena, all providential dispensations ascribed to God and under his control. This the only adequate and satisfactory reply to the question, "Is there not a cause?" The heavens are store-rooms to shut up or open at God's pleasure. He commands locusts to devour, and smites the land with pestilence (2 Chr. vii. 13). In all afflictive events God speaks to cities and nations. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name." **II. A moral design in the infliction of natural evils.** "When thou hast taught them the good way." Sufferings to nations, as to individuals, disciplinary, sent to humble, correct, and restore to God. 1. *To requite justice.* Retributions inevitable; nations corrupt and idolatrous cannot escape. God will not reverse his law. 2. *To lead to God.* "That they may fear thee." God must be acknowledged, to believe in whom is not superstition. The progress of art and the applications of science must not thrust him out from events. God smites to deliver, that we may pray to him, stand in awe of his justice, and adore his goodness. **III. A place for prayer in removing natural evils.** This denied by many. Prayer may be necessary for man's highest culture. "But no good can come of giving it a delusive value, by claiming for it a power in physical nature," says Prof. Tyndall. We do not classify it with powers in physical nature. It is not a *natural* but a *moral* power, and may have influence over the will of One above nature, viz., "Nature's God." God's

laws do not interfere with human will and human choice. The ordination of God leaves room for prayer. Prayer may be one of the laws of the universe as certain in its sphere as the laws of heat or of gravitation in their peculiar realms. Neither history, scripture, nor experience forbid us to pray in times of national distress. "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, &c."

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than the world dreams of" [*Tennyson*].

PRAYER FOR THE STRANGER.—*Verses 32, 33.*

Prayers in the temple to be answered in such a striking manner that unbelievers were to see proof of Jehovah's mercy. Probably many resident foreigners amongst the Jews. The number would increase by the attractions of Solomon's reign. This prayer indicates growing liberality to those "not of the people of Israel." **I. The benevolence of O. T. spirit.** This prayer larger and more comprehensive than that for the Israelites, a proof of benevolent and public spirit. Kindness to strangers argued—1. *From Israel's own experience.* Springing from humble origin; delivered from a strange land and great oppression, they were to love, pity, and relieve the stranger. Events in their history which might lead to feelings of rancour and revenge, such as in later periods brought upon them the stigma of being *hostes humani generis*, were the very ground on which the Mosaic law taught them benevolence to the wretched and defenceless of every nation. "The stranger that dwelleth with thee shall be unto thee even as one born among you, and *thou shalt love him as thine own self.* For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord" (Lev. xix. 33). 2. *From the known character of Israel's God.* For special purposes in the interests of humanity the covenant God of Israel. Yet no mere local, national divinity. "The Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords." "*He loveth the stranger.*" Every nation teaches hospitality and kindness to strangers, not as a civil and social, but sacred duty. In a higher sense than Zeus, God is "the stranger's God." Homer's touching language almost the sentiment of scripture. "Love ye therefore the stranger: for the Lord loveth the stranger."

"Love's special care
Are strangers poor and friendless."

II. The catholicity of O. T. spirit. The spirit of the petition beyond Jewish exclusiveness. Often said Jewish religion taught that benevolence should be confined to the narrow circle of families, tribes, or the nation; while the Gospel expands into wider fields and sets forth a "religion of humanity." But, says one, "Little as we may have heeded the fact, yet certain it is, that expressions of the most expansive philanthropy echoed in the anthems of the Jewish temple." In the Pentateuch and in the Psalms the feelings often overleap the ritual and challenge all nations to partake of Jewish privileges. A striking contrast to exclusiveness of after times, when Samaritans were indignantly excluded from sharing in the rebuilding of the temple (Ez. iv. 2, 3); and when Jews persecuted Paul for speaking of his mission to the strangers for whom Solomon prayed (Acts xxii. 22). **III. The prophetic element of O. T. spirit.** Great anticipations expressed in the prayer. 1. *When strangers would be led to believe in God.* They would hear of the marvellous deeds of Jehovah for his people, be drawn to the temple, worship and join in the devotions of the chosen people. "When he shall come and pray toward this house." 2. *When strangers would enjoy equal rights with the Jews.* In religious matters, when all surrounding nations were exclusive, Israel were commanded to admit

strangers to equal privileges, in the offerings of the tabernacle (Num. xv. 14-16); and at the solemn reading of the law once in seven years (Deut. xxxi. 12). In the spirit of this law Solomon anticipates, if not predicts, the time when from the remotest nations strangers shall come to pray and hope for acceptance before God on equal conditions with His people, without becoming citizens of the Jewish state, without submission to civil law or Mosaic ritual. "And fear thee, as doth thy people Israel." "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 26. *Heaven shut up.* 1. *All things controlled by God.* Atheism, Pantheism, and Materialism, all philosophy which sees nothing but law, nothing distinct from and above matter, reprov'd. 2. *All things controlled by God in the interests of men.* "All things work together," work in harmony, and subserve the ends for which they were made for the good of his people. 3. *These interests are secured by prayer and submission to God.* Not by science, education, or human industry without God. A regular system of agency connects results with the sovereign will of God. An unbroken link between the natural and moral world, between the conduct of men and the conditions of nature. The principle of mediation seen in all departments of God's government. "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

Vers. 26, 27. 1. *The path forsaken.* "The good way." Good in itself, end, and consequences to travellers. 2. *The method of return to it.* Discovery of wandering, confession of sin, and return to God. "Confess thy name, and turn from sin." 3. *The cause of this return.* "When thou dost afflict them." Some like metals, which nothing but fierce fire can purify (Mal. iii. 2, 3). Severe corrections reclaim. Manasseh (2 Chr. xxxiii. 12, 13), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 34-37). "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." "The order of Solomon's prayer is very observable here. First and chiefly, he prays for their repent-

ance and forgiveness, which is the chief blessing and the only foundation of all other mercies, and then he prays for temporal mercies, thereby teaching us what to desire principally in our prayers, which also Christ hath taught us in his perfect prayer, wherein there is but one petition for outward, and all the rest are for spiritual blessings" [Benson].

Vers. 29-31. *Heart Disease.* Special instances not given. Grievances innumerable. "Every man the plague of his own heart" (1 Ki. viii. 38). 1. *The diagnosis of the disease.* The heart the seat of sin; fountain from which issue sinful thoughts, words, and actions; "deceitful above all things," restless and dissatisfied. "Who can know it?" Many acknowledge it; few really feel, discover, and confess it. 2. *The cure of the disease by the great Physician.* Incurable by man. "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" When we enter the sanctuary, lament and seek deliverance, the sore will be healed. Bodily sufferings may be endured, but remorse of conscience, convictions of sin, wound of spirit, God alone can remove. "The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" 1. God's omniscience discerns. "Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men." 2. God's justice rectifies. "Render unto every man according to his ways." 3. God's mercy encourages. "Hear thou and forgive."

Vers. 32, 33. *The stranger.* 1. *The attractive force of God's house.* Not beauty of architecture or furniture, not members nor ritual, but God's presence revealed to devout worshippers. 2. *The*

wonderful provision made for those who come. Prayer and praise, the reading and exposition of Scripture. Every ordinance helpful and needful. "I will abundantly (surely) bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread" (Ps. cxxxii. 15). 3. *The missionary*

spirit in which we should return. What we hear of God should be told to others. His mighty deeds should be proclaimed to all nations. "That all people of the earth may know thy name and fear thee."

HOMILETICS.

DIVINE COMMISSION IN WAR.—Verses 34–39.

Israel not permitted to war for self-gratification, unlawful or ambitious ends ; only in just cause, and by divine warrant. "Thou shalt send them." **I. Israel engaged in wars for God may be delivered into the power of the enemy.** Commission alone would not preserve from sin, might lead to pride and self-reliance. Then foreign armies would enter the land, take them captives, and lead them into countries far away. God may send us, but through apostasy may withdraw and leave us to war alone. **II. Earnest prayer would restore them to liberty.** Captivity would lead to reflection, repentance, and prayer. 1. *Prayer offered in great distress.* "Carried captives," "in the land of their enemies," &c. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses." 2. *Prayer offered in deep reflection.* "Bethink themselves." Consider their ways, and reflect on the cause of their distress. Men thoughtless, and receive no correction from affliction. "In the day of adversity consider." 3. *Prayer offered with humble confession.* "We have sinned, we have done amiss." Confession should be full and free. Forgiveness only promised upon confession. "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." 4. *Prayer offered with earnest spirit.* "With all their heart and all their soul." With understanding, affections, and will ; without delay, with zealous and undivided hearts. "With my whole heart have I sought thee." 5. *Prayer offered in given direction.* "Toward the city chosen, and toward the house." Thus originated the favourite custom of ancient and modern Jews of turning towards Jerusalem in devotions. Prayer should ever be upwards, direct to the presence of God. Not to man, not without aim, but straight as an arrow to its centre. Not at random, but with orderly words and definite purpose. "In the morning will I direct (*set in order* as wood upon the altar, and shew-bread upon the table) my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Ps. v. 3). Only by this kind of prayer could they be delivered. Continuance in sin would increase their misery, prolong their captivity, and add to their griefs. By repenting and turning to God, restoration and peace would follow. "I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord ; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

THE ARK AND THE RESTING-PLACE.—Verses 40–42.

These words not found in Kings. There seems to be a return to the third great petition in expressions borrowed from the Psalms, and from the ancient song in the Wilderness (*cf.* Num. x. 35). **I. The ark the symbol of divine strength.** The sign and pledge of power exerted on behalf of his people ; the symbol of his glory (*cf.* Ps. lxxviii. 61) ; for when the ark was taken "the glory" was departed. God's presence to awe, help, and overcome.

"For the ark was not a dead ghost, but really showed that God was nigh to his church" [*Calvin*]. God present now in his word—"the rod of his strength" out of Zion, the centre of government from whence the word to overcome ignorance, prejudice, and opposition; to subdue rebels and win to Christ.

II. An earnest prayer to locate this divine strength. "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest." God desires an abode, a resting-place with men; should not be absent, nor driven away. Power everywhere displayed; but power of divine truth concentrated in God's house and in spiritual worship. Here should be "the resting-place," the fixed, permanent habitation of God. In the Christian Church and in human hearts the power of God should be felt and displayed. For this we should pray. Without God the ark even of no avail. "*Thou and the ark.*" **III. When this divine strength is exhibited in localities great blessings result.** Miraculous deeds and brilliant victories distinguished the Jews when God was with them; so now revivals and abundant signs of divine presence. "The name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there." 1. *In the full equipment of ministers.* "Priests," all officials "clothed with salvation." Not merely adorned with outward garments of sacerdotal beauty, but with spiritual gifts, righteous character and life, acceptable in persons and services before God and the people. 2. *In the exultant joy of saints.* "Let thy saints rejoice in goodness." Joy pure and holy, springing from God's presence and successful work. Not that trivial, fleeting, superficial thing which often bears the name; runs out in noise like the crackling of thorns. But serious, solid feeling which fills the soul as God fills the universe; satisfactory, inspiring, and exultant. "And her saints shall shout aloud for joy."

THE MERCIES OF DAVID.—*Verse 42.*

I. Remembrance most sacred. "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David" (Ps. lxxxix. 35). God is holy, infinitely above falsehood and deceit. To break his promise would profane his essential attribute. "He demands, on the part of his people, truth and fidelity towards himself, only on the ground of his own truth and fidelity towards them" [*Hengstenberg*].

II. Remembrance most unalterable. The unfaithfulness of man cannot alter the faithfulness of God. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." "The sure mercies of David."

III. Remembrance most powerful. For David's sake God raised up Solomon and spared the igs of Judah. For the sake of David's greater Son and seed he will bless the world. Blessings shall abound on earth, the influence of his covenant shall last to the end of time. "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 36-39. *Sin.* 1. A description of human nature. "No man which sinneth not." 2. A moral difficulty between God and man. "Thou be angry with them." 3. A cause of great trouble in man's experience. 4. A bitter experience in man's history. Sin in the universality of its existence, in the moral consciousness of men, in its prejudicial influence to human interests. *Pray toward the land.*

1. Conditions of its enjoyment. 2. Cause of its loss. 3. Method of its restoration. *Hear and forgive.* 1. Forgiveness the great need of man. No happiness and rest, no heaven and fellowship with God without. 2. Forgiveness the prerogative of God alone. Nature, conscience, and law know nothing of forgiveness. 3. Forgiveness bestowed through prayer and confession of sin. This answers God's character

and man's need, upholds moral order, and argues infinite risk in refusing to seek it in Christ. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Ver. 39. *Maintain their cause. The rights, interests, and cause of God's people at stake.* Require defending, clearing up, and preserving. 2. *This only done by God's help.* Human swords and hands grow weak and get broken. Standard-bearers faint and die. Impossible for holiest and mightiest to equal God's "mighty hand and stretched out arm." "With me," said Luther,

"moral effort is an alternation of rising and sinking, of advancing and retreating." 3. *This help must be enlisted by prayer.* "Hear and maintain." Prayer and contest combined. The bravest commanders men of prayer. Prayer a means of divine fellowship and training, imparts strength, courage, and victory in conflict.

"In all thou dost, first let thy prayers ascend,
And to the gods thy labours first commend;
From them implore success, and hope a prosperous end" [*W. Fleming*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 7, 8. *Wishing and willing.* To wish and to will are very different things. There are a thousand men who wish, where there is one man that wills. Wishing is but a faint state of desire. Willing is a state of the reason, and of the affections, and of the will in activity, to secure what one desires. A man may wish and yet reject all the steps and instruments by which that wish can be carried into effect. No man wills until he has not only made up his mind to have the end, but to have all the steps intermediately by which that end is to be secured [*Beecher*].

Vers. 19, 20. *The greatness of God.* Will he indeed, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, take up his abode with men? What heart among us but glows with gratitude and love at these joyful tidings! Let us, at the head of our several families in a transport of devout affection, welcome this kind and generous Guest into our houses. Let us give him the entertainment he demands, even that of a cordial love and obedience. Let us present him the sacrifices he requires, even those of daily prayer and praise. And let us tremble at the thought of so demeaning ourselves in the habitations he has thus honoured, as ever

to provoke him to depart thence [*S. Stennett*].

Solomon's Prayer. He prayed for wisdom at the outset, and he has verified the answer to prayer by the wonderful structure he put up. But the blessing did not end in architectural skill; that great proof of the blessing given to Solomon is to be found in the prayer which he prayed at the dedication of the temple. No man could have prayed that prayer without help. This we should have said about it in all honesty if we had found it in Sanscrit; if we had exhumed it out of Indian libraries, it would have been due to the author to have said, "You never dreamed that dream; it was a vision of God." Read the prayer from beginning to end, and say if this be not so. How majestic in conception! how beautifully eloquent in expression! how wise, how tender, how patriotic, how philanthropic! How it grows and swells, and abounds in all elements of spiritual sympathy! Probably there is no such prayer in all literary records. If ever that prayer be excelled it will be by the Son of God alone, and his excelling of it will be by contrast rather than by comparison [*Dr. Parker*].

CHAPTER VII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter, parallel with 1 Kings viii. 62; ix. 9, records acceptance of consecrated temple by fire (vers. 1-10); and answer given by the Lord to Solomon (vers. 11-22).

Vers. 1-10.—Acceptance of temple by fire. This not mentioned in Kings, which creates difficulty. "What it is important to bear in mind is—1. That omissions are not contradictions; and 2. That they occur constantly in all historical writers, and are frequently quite unaccountable" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Fire* as in tabernacle (Lev. ix. 24); *glory*, chapter v. 13, 14. Ver. 3. *Bowed* in adoration and reverence. Ver. 4. *All people* did not offer, but gave them to be offered on altar. Sacrifices enormous and difficult to realise. Ver. 6. *Waited* in their stations to receive, kill sacrifices, &c. *Instruments*, cymbals, harps, and psalteries (1 Chr. xv. 16; compare chap. v. 12). Ver. 7. *Middle court* on account of blood of sacrifices and burning of fat. Ver. 8. *Feast*, not feast of dedication only, but feast of tabernacles also (Lev. xxiii. 34). *Hamath* to river Sihor, which separated Egypt from Palestine. "The territory of Israel, according to its whole extent from north to south" (2 Chr. vii. 8) [*Keil*]. Ver. 9. *Solemn* assembly closed the festival. Kept dedication seven days and feast of tabernacle next seven days (1 Ki. viii. 65). Festival closed on 22nd of the month, on 23rd people sent home rejoicing.

Vers. 11-22.—God's answer to Solomon's prayer. "The narrative now runs parallel with 1 Ki. ix. 1-9, but is fuller and presents less of verbal agreement. Vers. 13-15 are additional to the earlier record" [*Speak. Com.*]. *King's house*, i.e., his own palace (*cf.* 1 Ki. vii. 1-12). *Vers. 12-22.* Explicit answer to Solomon. *Appeared* as at Gibeon (1 Ki. iii. 5; ix. 2). Ver. 13. *If, &c.*, answer to third petition (vi. 26). Ver. 14 recalls chief points in Solomon's prayer. Ver. 15. *Attent*, promise accords with very words of petition (*cf.* vi. 40). *Prayer of this place* (unarg.) "chosen to include the two cases of prayers offered in (vi. 24) and towards (vi. 34-38) the sanctuary" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 16. *Sanctified*. "Here additions to 1 Ki. ix., end and remainder of chapter adds nothing to the earlier record." Ver. 17. *Walk* refers to first petition; conditions which Solomon failed to meet. Ver. 19. The other alternative put before Solomon. Ver. 21. *This house* high, conspicuous in glory. *Astonishment* in ruin. Ver. 22. *All this* the fearful consequences of apostasy (*cf.* Ezekiel's wailing over the city and temple, xiv. 23; xxxvi. 17-20).

HOMILETICS.

THE FIRE AND THE GLORY.—Verses 1-3.

Two elements prominent in O. T. symbolism which made the dedication solemn, impressive, and real. **I. As confirmation of acceptance.** Sacrifice accompanied every act of worship. Miraculous fire a sign of acceptance, as Moses (Lev. ix. 24), Gideon (Judg. vi. 21), David (1 Chron. xxi. 26), Elijah (1 Ki. xviii. 38). Generally to accept burnt sacrifice in Hebrew was to turn to ashes. "Remember all thy offerings, and accept (turn to ashes or make fat) thy burnt sacrifice" (Ps. xx. 3). The surest evidence of acceptance in prayer is the descent of the holy fire upon us. This fills the heart with reverence and awe, as the glory filled the temple. This leads to humble submission to divine authority, and a true sense of unworthiness. "They bowed themselves," with profound reverence and humility. **II. As symbols of spiritual truths.** The *fire* indicative of God's nature. "Our God is a consuming fire," terrible in Zion, before whom sinners have reason to fear. But God consumed the sacrifices, not the offerers; turned away his anger, and showed mercy in their acceptance. Christ a great sacrifice for sin, through whom Holy Spirit given to apply the

word, consume sin, and convert the soul. The *glory* fills earthly temples, when his presence dwells in the sanctuary, and the heart is made a living temple—when Israelites rise from their prostrate attitude, regain their confidence, and offer themselves as sacrifices upon the altar of God—when hearts are tuned, and songs abound to God. “For he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.”

THE DEDICATED TEMPLE.—*Verses 1-10.*

Dean Milman's description most truthful and graphic (“History of the Jews,” vol. i., pp. 315-318). Here two glances at the scene, showing its outward grandeur and inward importance. **I. The eternal grandeur of the event.** The vast assembly, “all Israel” present. The enormous sacrifices, on a scale suitable to the extraordinary occasion, requiring the open court, in which the assembly only could take part. The preparation and offering of burnt offerings and peace offerings in festive joy. All—king, priests, and people—performing their part. The fall of the sacred fire, and the dazzling glory of the cloud resting on and then entering into the courts. The music and the oft-recurring chorus (Ps. cxxxvi.). The awe-struck priests and the nation on their knees would be an impressive sight. But notice—**II. The moral significance of the event.** This ceremonial was not commanded by the law, but the expression of devout sentiment and reverence in the people. The symbolic presence led the innumerable multitudes to prostrate themselves on the ground, the instinctive and natural expression of loving reverence. The *prostrate person* and the *bended knee* tokens of humility, unreserved surrender, and dutiful obedience. “O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” The consuming fire fills with dread. “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” Judgments alarm, glory without mercy leads to despair, but God accepts the sacrifice, and spares the offerer. “Which was the greater, the external magnificence or the moral sublimity of the scene?” asks Milman. “Was it the temple situated on its commanding eminence, with all its courts, the dazzling splendour of its materials, the innumerable multitudes, the priests in their gorgeous attire, the king with all the insignia of royalty on his throne of burnished brass, the music, the radiant cloud filling the temple, the sudden fire flashing upon the altar, the whole nation upon their knees? Was it not rather the religious grandeur of the hymns and of the prayer; the exalted and rational views of the Divine Nature; the union of a whole people in the adoration of the one Great, Incomprehensible, Almighty, Everlasting Creator?”

SOLOMON'S SACRIFICES.—*Verses 4-7.*

I. Sacrifice in its symbolic meaning. Refined nations of modern times esteem animal sacrifices a cruel and uncultured mode of expressing religious sentiments. But remembering the genius, habits, and moral instincts of ancient nations, and the special circumstances of the Jewish people, we see their fitness and propriety. Use of letters unknown, signs and symbols needful and beneficial. God instructs, helps, and encourages in this rite. Its value, therefore, partly actual, and partly typical, but in all respects derived from the one true sacrifice typified. **II. Sacrifice a form of true religion.** Opposed to heathen will-worship in place, method, and in the invention of costly and monstrous offerings. An evidence of obedience to God; a symbol of self-dedication, and an expression of thanksgiving. Some form of sacrifice always required in religion. He who offers nothing accounted irreligious (Ecc. ix. 2, *cf.* Is. xliii. 23). We must not forget the higher affections of the heart in over-

valuing the symbol, and turn our offerings into an *opus operatum*. "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." **III. Sacrifice a method of national festivity.** Festivals held in all ancient nations. Sacrificial meals common and under special direction in Israel. Sometimes in private houses, other times in the temple. Held weekly, monthly, and yearly. These methods not only commemorations of great national events, but occasions for reunion of friends, enjoyment of hospitality, and interchange of sentiment. Families would be filled with joy. Strangers, fatherless and widows received with religious warmth. The nation bound in unity, commerce, and brotherhood.

NATIONAL REJOICING.—Verses 8–11.

The time of dedication immediately before the feast of tabernacles. The festival prolonged, and afforded opportunity for large number of peace offerings, which were the means of national enjoyment. **I. Joy in its purest sources.** 1. *In Divine works.* "Solomon finished the house." Joy from contemplation of the order, beauty, splendour, and completion of temple. Its vast extent, manifold adaptations, practical use, and symbolic teaching. "I will triumph in the works of Thy hands." 2. *In the Divine presence.* Infinite and supreme, yet will dwell with man! In the vision and service of God we find the bliss of heaven. "We joy in God." 3. *In acceptance in the Divine presence.* God with man, not to judge, condemn, and destroy. "We shall surely die, because we have seen God," was the impression of Manoah. A popular belief that the revelation of God's terrible majesty would cause death, not joy. But the acceptance of the offerings a pledge of gracious disposition (Judges xiii. 23). The cloud and the fire at dedication of temple tokens of condescension and mercy. **II. Joy in its vast extent.** 1. *In all classes.* Universal joy. King, priests, and people partook of it. "All Israel with him, a very great congregation" (ver. 8). 2. *In all places.* In the palace of the king, and the tents of the people. In the temple of Jehovah, and the homes of the land, "from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt," the usual and known bounds, the utmost length of the land. "He sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart," thanking God for his goodness to David, to Solomon, a wise and religious son, and "to Israel his people." In this spirit we should go home from God's house; rejoice in the grace, advancement, and enthronement of the Redeemer, and in the sanctification and spiritual welfare of all believers.

GOD'S ANSWERS TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER.—Verses 12–22.

Acceptance of prayer seen in fire from heaven, and second appearance by night. **I. Answers to special prayers.** Solomon not aimless and indefinite, but specific. To prayer suggested by Holy Spirit, and offered according to God's will, answers are definite and explicit. Vers. 12–15 contain answer to third petition, ver. 16 to second, and vers. 17–22 to first. **II. Answers exceeding the prayer itself.** Solomon desired that God's eyes might be directed to the temple continually (ch. viii. 29). The answer is, "Not mine eyes only, but mine eyes and mine heart." Not only to Solomon's, but to prayer made toward that place in future from any person; not to the thoughts merely, but in the very words of the petitioner. We are straitened in ourselves, not in God, "who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." **III. Answers conditionally promised.** Suspended on conduct. This a test of faith, a motive to obedience, and a rule of

discipline. "If ye walk in my statutes . . . then I will give you, &c. But if ye will not hearken unto me . . . I will set my face against you" (Lev. xxvi. 1-20).

SOLEMN WARNINGS.—Verses 19-22

"The record of this second vision, in which were rehearsed the conditions of God's covenant with Solomon, and the consequences of breaking them, is inserted as a proper introduction to the narrative about to be given of the king's commercial enterprises, and ambitious desire for worldly glory. For this king, by encouraging an influx of foreign people, and a taste for foreign luxuries, rapidly corrupted his own mind and those of his subjects, that they turned from following God, they and their children" [*Jamieson*]. **I. God's goodness in warning before punishment.** God not revengeful and unjust. Judgment strange to Him. He gives space for repentance, opportunity to avoid danger; thus declares reluctance to punish, and goodness to warn. Longsuffering of God signally displayed. "Because sentence is not executed speedily," men should not resolve on sinful courses, and run to ruin. **II. Disobedience to warning exposes to punishment.** Sentence is gone forth, judgment only suspended, and seems to loiter, hence the sinner thinks there is *chance* of escape. "I shall have peace, though I walk in the way of my own heart." But warnings unheeded, calls neglected, hasten the stroke, and render the judgments heavier. Abuse of mercy only ripens for judgment. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." **III. Punishment which follows abused warning is merited and most severe.** A limit to discipline and patience. The time ends and the day of retribution comes. Ruin often sudden and without remedy. 1. *The temple cursed.* The house conspicuous for its sanctity, glory and usefulness, would become a desolation, a byword, and disgrace. 2. *The nation cursed.* "Plucked up," carried away, and exposed to mockery, insult, and despair in a foreign land. The temple of God no protection to those who forsake him. Their sins will be read in the judgments they suffer. Seek to be a monument of grace, not of judgment.

"Heaven gives the needful but neglected call.
What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts,
To wake the soul to a sense of future scenes" [*Young*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1 and 15, 16. *The Consecrated House.* Solomon builder, God consecrated, sanctified it. 1. By the symbolic cloud and sacred fire. 2. By his special care. "My eyes shall be open, &c." (v. 15). 3. By his constant affection. "Mine heart shall be there perpetually."

Ver. 11. The sun, the greatness, and the completion of Solomon's works—sacred, voluntary, and successful works. "The house of the Lord was seven years in building. But the court, the pillars, and all the external and internal fittings began to be con-

structed probably after the building was finished. The builders who were released from the work of the Lord's house were free to betake themselves to the erection of the royal palace and other public buildings. At the end of thirteen years (1 Kings vii. 1) the temple finishings and requisites were all completed, and everything was ready for the consecration" [*Murphy*].

"In the early days of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care.
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere.

“ Let us do our work as well,
 Both the unseen and the seen;
 Make the house, where God may dwell,
 Beautiful, entire, and clean”
 [Longfellow]

Ver. 12. *An house of sacrifice.* 1. In contrast with the synagogue, in which no sacrifice. 2. Descriptive of worship of O. T. with its symbolic rites, social feasts, and moral teaching. “ This expression does not elsewhere occur. Its meaning, however, is clear. God declares that Solomon’s temple is the place which he had promised to ‘choose’ from among the tribes of Israel, whereto all Israelites were commanded to bring their burnt offerings and sacrifices” (see Deut. xii. 5, 6) [Speak. Com.]. *The Lord appeared.* This vision presents a remarkable contrast with that recorded (1 Kings vi. 11-13) while the temple was in building. Then all was promise and encouragement; now, not only is warning mingled with promise, but as in Solomon’s own prayer, the sadder alternative seems in prophetic anticipation to overpower the brighter. In this there is (as often remarked) a striking exemplification of the austere and lofty candour of the inspired narrative, sternly contradicting that natural hopefulness in the hour of unexampled prosperity, which would have shrunk from even entertaining the idea that the blessing of God on the temple should be frustrated, and the glory of Israel pass away [Ellicott, O. T. Com.].

Vers. 15, 16. *Biblical Anthropomorphism.* Human organs. The eyes and ears of God. This language is used for two purposes. I. To express His cognisance of man. He knows us. 1. Directly. 2. Thoroughly. II. To express His interest in man. 1. In the various capacities of enjoyment with which He has endowed us, and the provision He made for them. 2. In the preservation of our existence, notwithstanding our sinfulness. 3. In our redemption by Christ Jesus. Conclusion: Thou God seest me, we unite with the blessed fact, “ Thou God lovest me” [Bib. Mus.]. *My name*

there for ever. God’s gifts are “ without repentance.” When he puts his name in the temple he does it, in intention, *for ever.* He will not arbitrarily withdraw it after so many years, or so many centuries. Once placed there, it will remain there *for ever*, so far as God is concerned. But the people may by unfaithfulness drive it away [Speak. Com.].

Vers. 19, 20. *Turn away.* 1. Possibility of wrong course. “ If ye *turn away.*” 2. Rapid progress when this course is adopted. “ *Forsake* my statutes,” easily understood and profitable to them, “ set before you.” Wholly forsake God for idols, then— 3. Fearful consequences. Entire defection would cut Israel off from the land. “ This whole passage stands out in bold relief, when illuminated by the light of history” [Murphy].

Ver. 20. *Plucked up.* 1. The soil in which they were planted, chosen and prepared by the Great Husbandman. 2. The source of their growth and fruit. “ From me is thy fruit found.” 3. The danger to which they were exposed. “ Plucked up.” No growth independent of God. Plants require rain, light, and warmth. We can only live as we live and are rooted in God. “ There would be men who are twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and the roots are only fit for burning. We do not know what God’s burning means. Let us take care how we exclude the penal element from our theology and from our contemplation of the future” [Dr. Parker]. Learn—1. The evil of apostasy. 2. The reality of God’s government. 3. The terrible effects of Divine displeasure.

Ver. 22. *Why thus?* A Problem. 1. The actual fact in history, that the Jews, the anciently favoured people of God, found to this day a byword and a proverb. 2. The question is, why hath the Lord done this? Has God changed his purpose, or been unfaithful to his word? The problem solved by the conduct of the people who forsook God and rejected the Saviour. “ It is notable, that in its reference to the two parts of the promise of David

there is a subtle and instructive distinction. As for the temple now just built in fulfilment of that promise, it is declared without reserve that in the case of unfaithfulness in Israel, it shall be utterly destroyed, and become an astonishment and a proverb of reproach before the world. But, in respect of the promise of the perpetuity of David's kingdom, the true Messianic prediction, which struck the key-note of all future prophecies, it is only said that Israel shall be 'cut off from the land,' and so 'become a proverb and a byword' in captivity. Nothing is said to contradict the original declara-

tion that even in case of sin the mercy of God would chastise and not forsake the house of David (2 Sam. vii. 13, 14; Ps. lxxix. 30-37). So again and again in prophecy captivity is denounced as a penalty of Israel's sin, but the hope of restoration is always held out, and thus the belief in God's unchanging promise remains unshaken. The true idea is strikingly illustrated by the prophet Amos (ix. 9-11): I will sift the house of Israel among all nations. . . . Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. . . . I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, &c." [*Ellicott, O. T. Com.*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 4, 5. *Sacrifices.* Profusion the usual feature of ancient sacrifices: 300 oxen formed a common sacrifice at Athens. But all sacrifices offered by men to God are inadequate. "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering." "Jehovah being so much greater than man, how can any sacrificial rites be worthy of Him?" [*Cheyne.*] "What real propitiation could be effected, though the whole region of Lebanon were made an altar, its pines and cedars piled up on it for firing, and its thousands of beasts offered as victims? Very different was the offering which was to procure man's redemption" [*Kay.*]. That offering which alone avails before God is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a sacrifice of infinite value because He is God. All our offerings, our acts of worship, our self-denial, our good deeds cannot *in themselves* avail with God. But they are accepted when offered upon "the altar which sanctifieth the gift," the altar of Christ's merits.

Vers. 8-10. *Feasts.* All bodily appetites should be attended to for purposes of *relief*, not *gratification*. The very moment we seek gratification in any organ or appetite of the body,

we degrade our nature, and dishonour our Creator. Our happiness is not in the body, but in the soul; not without, but within; and ought never to be sought for as an end, it comes only in self-consecration to duty and to God [*Dr. Thomas.*]. If I see a dish to please my appetite I see a serpent in that apple, and will please myself in a wilful denial [*Bishop Hall.*].

Ver. 12. *Heard thy prayer.* If I cared for nothing I would pray for nothing [*Melancthon.*].

"That work which is begun well is half-done;

And without prayer no work is well begun" [*Fanshawe.*].

Vers. 17-21. *Turn away.* Those who forsake God to return to the world, do it because they find more gratification in earthly pleasures than in those arising from communion with God; and because this overpowering charm, carrying them away, causes them to relinquish their first choice, and renders them, as Tertullian says, the penitents of the devil [*Blaise Pascal.*]. "God never leaves any till they first leave Him."

Vers. 21, 22. *Why?* Nothing but grace can teach us to make a right use of others' judgments [*Bishop Hall.*].

CHAPTER VIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Solomon's buildings (vers. 1-6); the tributaries (vers. 7-11); the festival worship (vers. 12-16); and the fleet of Solomon (vers. 17, 18) (1 Ki. ix. 10-28).

Solomon's buildings.—Vers. 1-6. *Twenty years* (cf. 1 Ki. vi. 38; vii. 1; ix. 10). *Cities* north-west of Galilee, the occupation of which was granted to Hiram, who seems, after consideration, to have refused them as unsuitable to the commercial habits of his people and returned them to Solomon, who *built* (Heb. *repaired*) and filled them with a colony of Hebrews. *Ham*, a territory bordering on *Zobah*, identified in Jewish tradition with Helbon (Aleppo). *Tadmor*, the famous Palmyra (palm-city), which became capital of a province (sent 80,000 men to join the Assyrian army), the splendid ruins of which remain to this day (a wall 11 miles in circumference). *Store cities* for provisions, situated on great trade roads to relieve travellers and beasts of burden. Ver. 5. *Beth-horon*s, two cities in Ephraim, very ancient (Josh. xvi. 3-5; 1 Ki. ix. 27; 1 Chr. vii. 24). Ver. 6. *Baal*, belonged to Dan (1 Ki. ix. 18, 19).

Solomon's tributaries.—Vers. 7-10. *Left*, descendants of Canaanites in the country treated as war-prisoners, employed in vast building operations, and had to pay tribute. Ver. 9. Sons of Israelites not serfs, but soldiers and officers. Ver. 10. *Chiefs* of Israelites only given, 250 in number. Ver. 11. *Daughter*, writer assumes points of narrative in 1 Ki. iii. 1 and 7, 8, and further assigns motive for change of residence. *Holy*, sanctified by presence of the ark, and as she was an idolator, therefore could not permanently dwell in the city.

Solomon's regulations of worship.—Vers. 12-16. An expansion and amplification of 1 Ki. ix. 23. They add several important particulars. No departure from the ordinances established by Divine authority by Moses or David in offering of sacrifices—arrangements of priests and Levites (1 Chr. xxiv. 26)—and in provision and management of all sacred things. Ver. 16. This verse sums up in brief the whole previous narrative on the subject of the temple, which began with ch. ii. Solomon's work "unto the day of foundation" was the subject of that chapter; his work subsequently has been related in chapters iii.-viii. [*Speak. Com.*].

Solomon's fleet and gold.—Vers. 17, 18. *Eloth* (*Elath*) (land of Greeks, north-east of the Gulf of Akaba. "The writer of Kings tells us that the fleet of Solomon was built at *Ezion-geber* (the *giant's backbone*, Num. xxxiii. 35, 36), "which is beside Eloth" (1 Ki. ix. 26); and *Ebon-geber* alone is mentioned as the place where Jehoshaphat built his ships (2 Chr. xx. 36). Solomon, it appears by the present passage, visited both ports before determining at which he should establish his docks [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 18. Solomon made his navy by receiving ships as models, materials for building, carpenters, and seamen from Hiram, who probably had ships lying in the ports of the Red Sea. His own servants went with the Phœnicians on the voyage. *Ophir*, son of Jokton (Gen. x. 29), gave name to the land of Ophir, which was at least originally in the south of Arabia, though some look for it in India or Ceylon. The 450 talents of gold (in Kings, 420) may have been the result of many voyages to this land [*Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

SOLOMON'S MILITARY ENTERPRISES.—Verses 1-6.

Chiefly in acquiring cities rebuilt and taken from the enemy. Solomon not satisfied to build God's house, ambitious to gain cities and enlarge his kingdom. Lawful ambition desirable—all interested in the welfare of the Christian Church will scheme for the good of the country. **I. Cities for stores** (cf. 1 Ki. ix. 19). Centres, *i.e.*, cities in which provisions for beasts, travellers, and troops (2 Chr. xxxii. 28). Chiefly north, in Hamath (ver. 4), and Naphtali (ch. xvi. 4). Solomon prudent in action and kind in planning for the necessities

of his people. **II. Cities for colonisation.** "Solomon built (rebuilt) them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there" (ver. 2). Cities out of repair, quitted by population, or never occupied by Israelites. Anxious to locate trade, promote industry, and for all to dwell in right place. **III. Cities for pleasure.** "Cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen;" dwellings for pleasure as distinguished from fortresses and store-cities. "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure." But pleasure is expensive, and demands costly sacrifices. "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man." **IV. Cities for defence.** The cities of Bethhoron and Baalath were fortified. His kingdom exposed required defence. Surrounding enemies dangerous, especially in north; strong garrisons required, and a levy of men and money to support a gigantic military system. Hence danger from wars, taxation, and oppression. *Suggested Lessons from Solomon's Military Enterprises.*—1. That those who attend to the spiritual will not neglect the temporal interests of a nation. Solomon built the temple, but patriotic enough to build cities. True religion ends not in ceremony, but in philanthropy. Those who build churches build hospitals. A libel to say that Christians who support missionary agencies neglect home. 2. That amidst the temporal enterprises of a nation great risks exist. Fortified cities needful, but indicate evils to be checked; incursions, insurrections, and subjugation. Hence—(1) *Lessons of Prudence.* Why "fenced cities with walls, gates, and bars?" "Silent witnesses against the honesty of the society in which we live. Every bolt upon the door is a moral accusation; every time we turn the lock we mean that there is an enemy outside who may endeavour to violate the sanctity of the house" [*Dr. Parker*]. (2) *The Danger of Prosperity.* "Commercial intercourse with foreign nations, the assimilation of the Israelitish monarchy to corresponding institutions of surrounding kingdoms, though indispensable to certain elements of the Church and State of Judea, yet was fraught with danger to a people whose chief safeguard had hitherto been their exclusiveness, and whose highest mission was to keep their faith and manners distinct from the contagion of the world around them. The gigantic experiment of Solomon, though partially and prospectively successful, yet in a greater part and for the moment failed. As he is the representative of the splendours of the monarchy, so is he also the type and cause of its ruin" [*Stanley*].

SOLOMON'S STATESMANSHIP.—Verses 7-10.

Civil government a divine institution. Cannot exist without laws and adjustments. These require wisdom to express and enforce. The people have instinct to obey, but lack power to govern. Hence need of statesmen and rulers. Solomon a wise ruler. **I. In the tributary services rendered by the people.** 1. *Foreigners non-Israelites employed as serfs.* Treated as prisoners of war, compelled to drudgery, hard labour, and to pay tribute (ver. 8). This a matter of policy and borrowed from Egyptian customs of employing lowest caste on public works. 2. *Native Jews employed in superior labour.* "Not bondmen, but men of war, servants, princes, captains, rulers of chariots and of horsemen" (1 Ki. ix. 22). Positions of honour and influence. **II. In the choice of officers to rule the people.** Officers divided into two bodies. The lesser consisted of twelve chiefs corresponding to the twelve princes of the twelve tribes, who administered the kingdom under David. Hence their wisdom and experience would be profitable to direct. The larger body were officers chosen from Israelites to control task work, exacted from Canaanites. No way of accounting for discrepancies in number (*cf.* 1 Ki. v. 16; 2 Chr. ii. 18, and

ver. 10 of this ch.) except by error of copyist, or to imagine with many, that 250 were on duty at once. Solomon desired the ablest men for the best work. Some fitted, born to rule, and others to serve. **III. In the appointment of all classes of the people to their proper sphere.** Work for all and every one at work for which best adapted. Some to labour, others to think and direct. Not great men to do small work and weak men to fail in responsible work. Canaanites and Israelites all useful. This law of adaptation essential to success in family circles, church government, and national legislation. "Thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

SOLOMON'S MARRIAGE.—Verse 1

At beginning of his reign he married an Egyptian princess, assigned her a temporary abode in Jerusalem until a suitable place could be found. **I. As a matter of worldly policy.** A startling act, for since Exodus no intercourse between two countries. Sprang from desire to counteract influence of Hadad, who was received with royal honours and formed alliances with king of Egypt (1 Ki. xi. 14-20); from wish to obtain support for his new dynasty and recognition from one of older fame and greater power; from anxiety to strengthen himself by foreign alliances. Besides the new queen brought with her a frontier city as a dowry. Gezer still possessed by remnant of Canaanites. Pharaoh had led his armies against it, and tranquillity of Israel threatened. But this worldly policy. Many marriages for inferior motives. Better look to bonds that unite families and thrones to God. **II. As a source of moral perplexity.** What must be done with her? If she conformed with the Hebrew faith, yet as a foreigner she must dwell in a separate place, not near the ark, the symbol of Divine presence. The house of God, holy, must be free from personal and official pollution. This a matter of conscience to Solomon, who felt that God's presence sanctified all localities; that a broad distinction must be made between Judaism and heathenism, between idolatry and the worship of Jehovah. When this distinction is ignored and worldly policy adopted, men plunge into temptations and find it difficult to rectify errors by punctilious morality and zealous care about trifles. **III. As the beginning of trouble.** The policy advantageous at first, but ultimately proved hollow and impolitic. A revolution in Egypt changed its dynasty or its policy, and the court welcomed the fugitive Jeroboam in his efforts to secure kingly power. By seeking fresh alliances, giving way to lust for "strange women," Solomon involved in worship of strange gods, &c. The reign which began so gloriously ended in gross darkness and fetish worship.

SOLOMON'S RELIGIOUS SERVICE.—Verses 12

Solomon not only built the temple, but worshipped in it. What use a temple without worship? The duty of high and low to meet for worship. **I. Remarkable for its conformity to Divine Law.** "According to the command of Moses." God the supreme object and his revealed will the rule of worship. 1. *In its appointed seasons.* Daily sacrifices. "A certain rate every day." "Every day will I bless thee." "On the sabbaths." *Weekly* sacrifices; *monthly* "on the new moons;" and *yearly* at the three solemn feasts. "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose." 2. *In its customary method.* As Moses commanded and David observed (ver. 14), care should be taken to observe divine order, but custom

should never fetter spirit. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, we should be free, thankful, and devout. "The heart will observe its own order." **II. Remarkable for its systematic arrangements.** "Order is heaven's first law." 1. *Arrangements divinely appointed.* Priests in their courses; Levites in their charges; porters at the gates, and persons to manage the treasures (*cf.* 1 Chr. xxvi. 20-23). 2. *Arrangements scrupulously observed.* By every person and in every particular. "They departed not from the command of the king concerning any matter" (v. 15). 3. *Arrangements completing the work.* "So the house of the Lord was perfected." This the finishing touch to erection and consecration. Something incomplete without real worship, reverent order and self-surrender. *Sacrifice* the essence and result of worship. "I will freely sacrifice to thee."

"One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds" [*Cowper*].

SOLOMON'S GREATEST WORK.—Verse 16.

This verse a brief summary, describing method and completion of Solomon's greatest work. Temple work was prepared, *i.e.*, contemplated and fixed, before built and completed. **I. It was wisely planned.** Prudence displayed in collection and preparation of materials. The cost counted—1. *Suggesting wise forethought.* Every part of an undertaking should be well considered and weighed. "Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself." 2. *Providing against failure.* What wrecks in all departments of human labour through want of forethought and preparation! "This man began to build and was not able to finish." **II. It was nicely furnished.** Not half done, nor slovenly done. Finished in furniture, style, and ceremonies. *Perfected* in harmony with God's will. "A thing of beauty and a joy for ever." Choose your life's work. Collect materials and build for God. Begin well and in God's strength finish. Never be

"Like one who draws a model of a house,
Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,
Gives o'er, and leaves his part-created cost
A naked subject to the weeping clouds,
And waste for churlish winter's tyrant."

SOLOMON'S FLEET.—Verses 17, 18.

I. The method of its construction. Hiram *sent*, supplied him, *i.e.*, built him ships, *viz.*, in docks at Eloth (*cf.* 1 Ki. ix. 26, 27) [*Jamieson*]. Or Solomon made his fleet, by receiving model ships, materials, and carpenters from Hiram. "The probability is either that the Tyrians maintained at this period a fleet in the Red Sea, or that Hiram's shipwrights constructed, at their master's expense, some ships on that sea, and then presented them to the Jewish monarch" [*Speak. Com.*]. **II. The voyages it undertook.** Solomon monarch and merchant. Egyptians might have been rivals in southern maritime traffic, but their religion and exclusive principles unfavourable to sea voyages. They probably abstained from sending their own people abroad for commerce. Solomon's fleet opened the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, the far east and the far west. The extraordinary influence of these voyages on their own and on all future times was remarkable [see Stanley's *Jew. Ch.*, vol. ii., p. 155]. **III. The cargo it brought.** Articles of commerce most abundant; *almug*, ivory, aloes, cassia, cinnamon, apes and peacocks, strange

plants and animals, fragrant woods and brilliant metals, silver and gold. "Gold of Ophir" the most famous in the world. Men more precious than gold; wisdom more precious "than the merchandise of silver." "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." **IV. The sailors who manned it.** Hebrews had none capable of performing distant expeditions; were only fishermen, whose boats coasted on the shores of the Mediterranean, or plied on inward lakes. Tyrians manned the navy of Solomon, who excelled in nautical science (*cf.* 1 Ki. v. 6; ix. 27). "When we consider that in the case of Solomon the commercial wealth of the entire community was concentrated in the hands of the government, that much of the trade was a monopoly, and that all was assisted or directed by the experience and energy of the Tyrians, the overwhelming riches of this eminent merchant-sovereign are, perhaps, not surprising."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Caused Israel to dwell there.* Principles of colonisation—1. A matter of necessity often. To provide for employment, surplus population; and 2. Should always be in the interests of humanity. Not for national glory, material prosperity, or destruction of uncivilised races. What remains of the colonies founded by ancient nations? Prosperity and duration only when God plants a people (America and the Pilgrim Fathers).

Vers. 4-6. If some of the public works had *the plea of utility*, the fortifications of some cities for purposes of defence (Millo the suburb of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, the two Bethhorons); the foundation of others (Tadmor and Tiphisah) for purposes of commerce. These were simply the *pomps of a selfish luxury*; and the people, after the first dazzle was over, felt that they were so. Forty thousand horsemen made up the measure of his magnificence (1 Ki. iv. 26). As the treasury became empty taxes multiplied, and monopolies became more irksome. If, on the one hand, the division of

the kingdom came as a penalty for Solomon's apostasy from Jehovah, on the other, it was the Nemesis of a selfish passion for glory, itself the most terrible of all idolatries [*Bib. Dict.*].

Ver. 14. *David the man of God.* A wonderful title. Only applied to Moses and a nameless prophet, besides David. 1. How gained; 2. What it implies in character and life.

Vers. 12-18. Here we find—1. Solomon "diligent in business." Building and fortifying cities; engaging ships and trading to Ophir. Thus occupied usefully for his country, and employed many that would, perhaps, have otherwise been idle. 2. Solomon "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Carefully guarding the sanctity of God's house, duly offering sacrifices at all appointed times, and seeing that priests and Levites performed the sacred duties devolving upon them. Here Solomon exhibited religion as it should be; the concerns of life not unfitting him for religion, nor religion unfitting him for the concerns of life [*Ingram Cobbin's Com.*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 2. *Cities.* Some of these fortified places may have been necessary to keep in check the Canaanitish population, who were likely to fret under the forced labour which he exacted from

them [*Tuck*]. *Dwell there.* The increase of a great number of citizens in prosperity is a necessary element to the security and even to the existence of a civilised people [*Buret*].

Vers. 7, 8. *Pay tribute.* A mercantile democracy may govern long and widely; a mercantile aristocracy cannot stand [*Landor*].

“Curs'd merchandise! where life is sold,
And avarice consents to starve for gold”
[*Kowe*].

Vers. 12-15. *Burnt offerings.* Before we ask what a man worships, we have to ask whether he worships at all [*Ruskin*]. Solomon was great in burnt offerings. Do not men sometimes make up in burnt offerings what they lack in moral consistency? Is not an ostentatious religion sometimes the best proof of internal decay? It ought not to be so. The hand and the heart should be one, the outward and the inward should correspond, the action should be the incarnation of the thought. We are not always to look upon the ceremonial action of the church as indicative of its real spirituality. Sometimes men make a great noise in order to conceal a courage that is giving way [*Dr. Parker*].

Ver. 16. *Prepared.* When Bishop Heber read his beautiful poem, “Palestine,” in manuscript to Sir Walter Scott, his friend remarked that in speaking of the temple of Solomon he had for-

gotten to refer to the silence which prevailed during its erection. The poet immediately retired for a few minutes, and introduced the following beautiful lines:—

“No workman's steel, no ponderous axes
 wrung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric
 sprung.”

This circumstance is remarkable as an indication of the method of preparation and of the deep sense which Solomon had of the sacredness of his work.

Vers. 17, 18. *Ships.* I am wonderfully delighted to see a body of men thriving in their own fortunes, and at the same time promoting the public stock; or, in other words, raising estates for their own families, by bringing into their country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous. Nature seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings among the different regions of the world, with an eye to their mutual intercourse and traffic among mankind, that the nations of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common interest [*Adulison*].

CHAPTER IX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Vers. 1-12. This narrative is parallel with 1 Ki. x. 1-13, from which it varies little; Solomon's glory (vers. 13-23); and the close of his reign (vers. 29-31) corresponding with 1 Ki. xi. 41-43.

Vers. 1-12.—*The Queen of Sheba's visit.* Two Shebas, Ethiopian and Arabian. Both countries have traditions on the visit; in both government by queens was common. Sheba, in Arabia, was the great spice country and an important kingdom. Sheba in Ethiopia a mere town and furnished no spices. The expression “Queen of the South” (Matt. xii. 42) corresponds with Hebrew Teman (Arabic *Yemen*), and Jewish and Christian traditions in favour of Arabian Sheba. *Fame*, by the Ophir fleet. *Name*, Solomon's great knowledge of God, or great things which God had done for him. *Questions*, lit. riddles (enigmas, Judge xiv. 12; Ps. xlix. 4; Prov. i. 6; Ezek. xvii. 2). In East natural acuteness, united with idle life, still make these exercises of understanding a favourite amusement. Ver. 1. *Camels*, &c., a common method of travelling by these beasts of burden in Arabia, a country most famous also for spices. *In her heart*, in her mind. Ver. 3. *Told*, i.e., answered all her questions without any exception. She could not puzzle him. Vers. 4, 5. *Seen*, wisdom, natural endowments. *House*, the palace; the variety and luxury of table. *Sitting*, i.e., the seats, the place assigned to each according to gradation, or collective body

and orderly manner of domestic arrangements. *Standing posts* of ministers; apparel of (cup-bearers) butlers; *ascend* (Heb.), burnt offerings which he offered, by Luther, LXX, and others. Generally thought to be a superb way for the king's use alone, as Emperors of China ascend the throne by steps consecrated to their use alone. "A stair by which he went up to the house of God," "a private way from the palace on the western, across the ravine up the eastern hill to the temple area" [*Keil*]. *Spirit in her*, an expression for highest degree of admiration and astonishment. Ver. 5. *True report*, word of acts, sayings. Ver. 6. *Laccedest*, thou hast added to report. Ver. 8. *Blessed*, a frank acknowledgment of Solomon's God, but no reason to think she adopted Him as her God. Ver. 9. *Gave*, not as tribute, but in token of friendship (about £720,000, Jamieson). Vers. 10, 11. *Mercantile transactions. Algum trees*, sandal wood. *Terraces*, high ways (margin), stairs, steps. *Psalteries* (1 Samuel x. 5). Ver. 12. *Desire*, in the way of bounty. *Asked*, Oriental custom to ask, specify what is agreeable. Solomon gave ample remuneration for presents in exchange with him, i.e., besides his presents for hers, he made a free donation of whatever she liked.

Vers. 13-28.—*Solomon's wealth. Weight* (cf. 1 Kings x. 14-29). *Chapmen*, who buy and sell, probably smaller retail merchants. *Governors* in outlying dominions. Heb. *pechah*. "If connected with *pashah*, the history of the word would be curious" [*Max Müller*]. Ver. 15. *Targets*, large shields, covering the whole man, made usually of wood or wicker-work covered with leather. *These* made for ornamentation and plated with gold. Ver. 16. *House*, a part of the royal palace (1 Kings vii. 2-5), resembling a forest in structure; used for state purposes and an armoury for targets and shields. Vers. 17-19. The throne of *ivory*, not all solid, but parts veneered with it. *Footstool*, the throne raised. *Stays*, arms on each side of seat. *Lions*, symbols of royal power. Ver. 19. Number alludes to twelve tribes of Israel. Ver. 20. *Accounted*, because of abundance; scarcity a value. Ver. 21. *Turkish*, prob. Tartessus in Spain. *Peacocks*, thought to have come from India. Some give "parrots." Ver. 22. *Fassed*, outvalled (1 Kings iii. 13). Kings of neighbouring nations. *Sought* (1 Kings iv. 34). *Present* tribute of respect year by year. Ver. 25. *Four thousand*, not forty thousand, considered an error in copyist (1 Kings iv. 26). Ver. 26. *River Euphrates*. Ver. 27. *Stones*, fig. for abundance and comparative worthlessness. Ver. 28. *Horses* from lands famous for good breeds.

Vers. 29-31.—*Solomon's death. Book*, words. Three sources given, only in 1 Kings xi. 29. *Nathan* (2 Sam. vii. 1-17). *Abijah* (1 Kings xi. 11-13, 29-39), in earlier part of Solomon's life. *Idlo* (2 Chr. xii. 15; xiii. 22), in later years of reigns of Saul and David. "The Chronist omits the blemishes that marked the character and administration of Solomon, and leaves the impression that notwithstanding these he continued to be a follower of the Lord unto the end of his career. This is in harmony with his design to note the progress of the kingdom of God in its religious aspect" [*Murphy*].

HOMILETICS

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON—Verses 1-12.

Solomon's influence upon surrounding nations very great. Legends abound in Jewish and Arabic traditions, like those concerning Nimrod and Alexander. Visit of the queen conspicuous instance and given as a sign to us (Matt. xii. 42). **I. The spirit which prompted the visit.** Its method, long train of camels, in striking harmony with Eastern imagination. What its spirit? 1. *A spirit of curiosity.* She heard of Solomon's wisdom and glory, co-extensive and manifold in forms. "The countries marvelled at thee, for thy interpretations, songs, and proverbs and parables" (Eccles. xlvii. 14-17). Solomon's fame like Christ's, could not be hid. Curiosity excited and she desired to know, to ascertain truth. 2. *A spirit of inquiry.* She came to hear his wisdom and enlarge her own; to ask as well as answer questions. "The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the very nature of true philosophy. 'To ask questions rightly,' says Lord Bacon, 'is the half of knowledge.' 'Life without cross-examination is no life at all,' said Socrates. When we inquire, when we restlessly question in our search after truth, when we seek it from unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise King of Judah and the wise Queen of Sheba" [*Stanley*]. 3. *A spirit of restlessness.* Rank, wealth, and position could not satisfy. Something beyond herself and her wise men, to know and feel. No trifling questions, questions merely to puzzle.

Hard questions concerning "the name of the Lord" whom Solomon worshipped. Problems ever new and ever old, found in the book of Job and stirring the hearts of men to-day. "How shall man be just with God?" "Where shall wisdom be found?" &c. Only "an interpreter, one among a thousand," can answer these questions. 4. *A spirit of self-sacrifice.* Curiosity prompted to action, anxiety led her to start on a long and risky journey. A reproof, says Christ, to indifference and stupidity concerning himself. True wisdom is of great price. Those who know and seek its worth will not begrudge the cost.

II. The mutual intercourse during the visit. Solomon did not blame her for her trouble and weakness; gave her every encouragement and permitted her "to commune with him of all that was in her heart," freely and fully. 1. *He answered her questions.* "Solomon told her all her questions" (ver. 3). Natural, political, intellectual, or religious. He was equal to the test and could not be puzzled (see traditions). Taught of God, he could teach others. "A divine sentence in the lips" of this king satisfied every inquiry. Jesus can remove doubt and perplexity, ease the mind, and teach all we desire to know. 2. *He received her gifts.* Not content with words, she gave practical expression to gratitude. Useless are verbal thanks if life be void of lovely deeds. These rich presents show the extent of her commerce, and the appreciation of her intercourse with the Hebrew monarch. Solomon accepted her gifts, and gave, in addition to customary exchanges, "of his royal bounty." Neither cared for gold. Both valued wisdom, cultivated and confirmed their friendship by mutual kindness and conversation. "She communed with him." **III. The impressions received from the visit.** Welcomed sincerely, valuing her privileges, she was intent on learning and observant of all she could. 1. *She was astonished at the magnificence of Solomon.* High culture and magnificence exceeded anything she had ever seen. Meals served with great state. Tables at which king, guests, and ministers sat down displayed variety, luxury, and splendour. The order of domestic arrangements, varied costumes and attire of ministers, choice vessels of cup-bearers, all impressed her acute mind. The houses, streets, and buildings of Jerusalem, the temple and the king's private entrance into it, like a scene of enchantment to her. She was overwhelmed. "There was no more spirit in her," almost fainted with astonishment. 2. *She was surprised at the wisdom of Solomon.* This chiefly impressed her mind. "When she had seen the wisdom of Solomon" (ver. 3). A word which, in Hebrew, comprehends not only natural endowments and useful qualities, but practical knowledge. The economy of his government, the schemes of industry and the works of art displayed familiarity with natural science and deep insight into the principles of human nature. This wisdom was superhuman. She acknowledged it to be from Solomon's God, "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice" (ver. 8, cf. Prov. viii. 15). 3. *She was confirmed in her belief concerning Solomon.* "It was a true report which I heard, &c." (ver. 5). Faith exercised will be strengthened, really tested will give greater certainty. "The one-half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me." This just the result of honest search after truth, of personal intercourse with Christ and of engagement in God's service. This is the way "to verify your beliefs." Hear, see, and feel. Wonders of grace, depths of experience to be discovered beyond all comprehension! "That ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

HEART COMMUNING.—*Verse 1.*

Not generally wise to tell all our heart. Samson reached the climax of folly when he did this to Delilah. Yet if we could meet with a Solomon who could solve all our difficulties we might wisely do so. A greater than Solomon in

Jesus, who is incarnate wisdom. With him too silent, with worldly friends too communicative. **I. We ought to communicate with him of all that is in our heart.** 1. Neglect of intercourse with Jesus is very unkind. "Let me see thy countenance, &c." (Cant. ii. 14.) 2. To conceal anything from so true a friend betrays the sad fact of something wrong. 3. Shows a want of confidence in his love, sympathy, and wisdom, if we cannot tell Jesus all in our hearts. 4. Will be the cause of uneasiness in ourselves if we withhold anything from him. Responsibility will rest and weigh heavily with us. 5. Will involve the loss of counsel and help. He meets our case when we unbosom ourselves. 6. Reticence towards Jesus is greatly aggravated by eagerness to tell our troubles to others. Will you make a confidant of man and hide the matter from God? **II. We need not cease communing for want of topics.** 1. Our sorrows. He knows what they are, will comfort us under them, help to profit by them, &c. 2. Our joys. He will sober and salt them. Joy without Jesus, sun without light, the essence gone. 3. Our service. He a servant knows our heart, can sympathise with our difficulties. 4. Our plans. He has zeal, ardour, quick of understanding, and will gladly commune with us concerning all in our hearts to do for God. 5. Our success and failures should be reported at head-quarters. The disciples of the martyred John (Matt. xiv. 12), the evangelists of our Lord, returned to him (Lu. ix. 10). 6. Our desires. Holiness, usefulness, heaven, awaken the sympathy of Jesus, who prays for us about these things. 7. Our fears. Fears of falling, needing, failing, dying. 8. Our loves. Of earth and heaven, towards others and himself. 9. Our mysteries. Incomprehensible feelings, uneasiness, emotions, will be better for ventilation in presence of Jesus. **III. Nor shall we cease communing for want of reasons.** 1. How ennobling and elevating is intercourse with Him! 2. How consoling and encouraging with Him who has overcome the world! 3. How sanctifying and refining union with the Perfect One! 4. How safe and healthy is a daily walk with ever-blessed Son of Man! How proper and natural for disciples to talk with their Teacher, and saints with their Saviour! 6. How delightful and heavenly is rapturous converse with the Beloved! Warning to those who never speak with Jesus—"I never knew you." Complaint of those who seldom commune—"Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" Hint to those usually in communion with him—Keep up the holy intercourse; to this end be thorough; unlock every room in the house and let Jesus enter. Congratulation to those who have long enjoyed his fellowship [*Spurgeon*].

SOLOMON'S HOUSEHOLD AND CHRIST'S HOUSEHOLD.

Compare them—**I. In the splendour of appearance.** *Solomon himself*, inferior to Christ in person, wisdom, and dominion. The *glory* of court artificial, product of labour, and liable to decay; Christ's inward, spiritual, and lasting. **II. In the servants engaged.** 1. Their *position*: Near the king, standing, sitting, waiting and watching attitude. 2. Their *attire*: Beautiful, costly, fit, and free. 3. Their *felicity*: "Happy are thy servants." Apply the eulogy to Christians, happy now and hereafter. **III. In the provision made for members.** Costly, abundant, satisfactory, and free. Wisdom hath prepared a feast; come in and partake. "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. *The Queen a Type of Truth-seekers.* 1. *In her spirit.* Reverence for God, sincerity of desire for light and knowledge. 2. *In her self-sacrifice.* Allured from groves of palm to hear and know wisdom, she

undertook a journey not much less than a thousand miles from "uttermost parts of the earth," *i.e.*, from the extremities of the world then known. 3. *In her reception by Solomon.* Illustrates welcome to inquirers by God "that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," with past ingratitude or future abuse (as Solomon abused his wisdom at length). Man "giveth little and upbraideth much" (*cf.* *Eccles.* xx. 15; xli. 23). Or—1. She sought in the right disposition. 2. She sought from the right source. 3. She sought in belief of its reality. 4. She sought to possess it and render homage to it. The rule "he who seeks shall find."

Vers. 3-8. 1. *Experimental evidence.* "I came, and mine eyes had seen it" (ver. 6). Many hear and admit, but gospel for trial its power must be felt; arguments, evidence insufficient without experience. To sceptics and doubting our appeal is, "Come and see." To all who come the surprise will be great.

"Now, we believe not for thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." 2. *Express testimony.* Open confession follows experimental evidence. Christ tells all in our hearts and discloses secrets of life and conscience, reveals himself to earnest inquiry, excites wonder, admiration, and love. Grateful acknowledgments.

Ver. 8. 1. *The source of Solomon's greatness.* Queen reminds him that God must be praised for the greatness of the nation, and for the wisdom of its ruler. 2. *The design for which the greatness bestowed.* Not for his own, but for the sake of his people, God chose him to occupy the throne. He permits and appoints. Government in all ministrations. Kings, princes, nobles, judges, a Divinely constituted power, to be held in subordination to "King of kings" and administered for the good of people, "to do judgment and justice."

HOMILETICS.

WISDOM SOUGHT.—Verses 1, 23 and 24.

"All the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom" (1 Kings x. 24). Sought the face of Solomon, who had unveiled wisdom and given to the world its beauty and use. **I. The indigence of human greatness.** A *queen* and *kings* seeking! Rank and wealth of no avail. Monarchs in their palaces, and peers in their mansions, happy only in loyal obedience, under the dominion of truth (*wise-dom*). "Where shall wisdom be found?" Facts in matter and mind require a solution, problems in moral life press heavily and fearfully upon the heart. The richest, most learned cry for an interpreting principle. We may get pearls from the ocean, treasures from the earth, but "where is the place of understanding?" "God understandeth the way thereof, &c." **II. The Divine source of supply.** God "the only wise God." "The wisdom of Egypt" proverbial in geometry, astronomy, and medicine, but "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt." God gives sufficiency to the most indigent and most exalted. 1. It cannot be bought with money. "Man knoweth not the price thereof." 2. It cannot be found by investigation. Search in realms of nature useless. "The depth saith it is not in me, and the sea saith it is not in me." The domains of life and of departed spirits reveal it not. "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." **III. The need of personal effort to secure this supply.** They heard and *came* to see. The attainment depends upon the spirit and effort of the seeker. A scorner is proud, irreverent, "seeketh wisdom and findeth it not." The slothful excuse—the distance is great, the price is too much, "there is a lion in the way."

Diligence and activity the conditions of getting and enjoying the blessing. True and earnest inquirers, like Queen of Sheba, Nicodemus, Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, and the Ethiopian eunuch travelling hundreds of miles, seek and secure knowledge, the highest knowledge, the knowledge of God, the centre and soul of all science. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."

"Truths on which depend our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read" [Cowper].

SOLOMON'S GLORY AND DEATH.—Verses 13-31.

Solomon pre-eminent, surpassed all kings of the earth, &c. **I. Solomon's glory.** Of two kinds, material and moral. 1. *Material glory.* None with greater splendour, which glittered in the eyes of his people like the sun. Gold and silver, large treasures untold. Empire and power unique. Tributary princes and presents from all parts of the known world. Household extensive, exchequer unlimited, and fame universal. 2. *Moral glory.* Moral and mental qualities equal to his surroundings, and preserved harmony between himself and kingly state. Scripture specially dwells on *wisdom*. Men of noted intelligence in his own country: Ethan in charge of temple music, Heman "the king's seer in the words of God," Chalcol and Darda: but Solomon "wiser than all men" (1 Ki. iv. 29-31). Sage, poet, and naturalist—an intellect stored with vast information; active, shrewd, and penetrating; a heart kind, sympathies wide, rising to high and noble thoughts of God. These more becoming and better than material grandeur. Wisdom better than wealth. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." **II. Solomon's death.** Reign not long, though glorious. End certain. Glory and death strange association! A common end to great and small. "Solomon *slept* (lit., lay down) with his fathers." The crown, the robes of office, and the sceptre of power must be laid down. "To leave these things," said a nobleman crowned with honours, "makes one miserable." Kings extraordinary and brilliant level with the meanest in the grave. They come, reign, and sleep, and so history rolls on. "Where will you leave your glory?"—in fragrant names, righteous deeds, and holy life? or in grief, disgrace, and oblivion? "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom." "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 17-19. *Solomon's throne.* The symbol of a throne of grace. The seat of judgment and dominion: of public audience to nobles, strangers, and all who resorted to him. For beauty and strength, workmanship and design, "there was not the like made in any kingdom."

Ver. 23. *Wisdom.* Knowledge of God's works, skill in physic and state-policy, rules of prudence for human life and principles of true religion. *God*

put in his heart. Supernatural gifts in answer to prayer. 1. The lesson. 2. The learners. 3. The method of teaching. 4. The warning to us. Application made in eagerness, to hear Solomon aggravates, shames and condemns general contempt for Christ, in whom are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." 5. A prophecy that "all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1, 2. Philosophy was born a Pagan; but she may become a Christian, and should be christened "Mary." She may be proud to sit at Jesus' feet. Hellas coming to Judea's Messiah is a rarely beautiful sight [*Dr. Duncan*].

Questions. Do not suppose that wisdom is so much flattered at having you for a pupil that she will set you easy lessons, and yet give you the gold medal [*T. T. Lynch*]. Questioners must be teachable. When Haydn was in London, a nobleman came to him for lessons in music, but found fault with all that Haydn said. At last, out of patience, the musician exclaimed, "I see, my lord, that it is you who is so good as to give lessons to me, and I am obliged to confess that I do not merit the honour of having such a master" [*Spurgeon*]. *Communed.* Do you want anything of which you cannot tell your Lord? It argues either no real need or else little faith. Strong faith hath free communion with heaven, and conceals nothing, but tells all. Ep. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness." The word boldness is "telling all" [*Thos. Boston*].

Vers. 9 and 24. *Presents.* There is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the

fingers [*Seneca*]. We like the gift when we the giver prize [*Ovid*].

Vers. 20-23. *Gold.* Greatness stands upon a precipice, and if prosperity carries a man ever so little beyond his poise, it overbears and dashes him to pieces [*Seneca*]. Prosperity seems to be scarcely safe unless it be mixed with a little adversity [*Hosea Ballow*].

Ver. 29. *First and last.* His first were best; of his last this historian saith nothing, but layeth his finger on the scar [*Trapp*]. Solomon did not live to a very great age, since he was not more than twenty years old when he ascended the throne. Whether Solomon turned to the Lord again with all his heart, a question widely discussed by the older commentators, cannot be ascertained from Scripture. If the Preacher (*Koheleth*) is traceable to Solomon, so far as the leading thoughts are concerned, we should find in this fact an evidence of his conversion, or at least a proof that at the close of his life he discovered the vanity of all earthly possessions and aims and declared the fear of God to be the only abiding good, with which a man can stand before the judgment of God [*Keil*].

CHAPTER X.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Here begins the fourth part of the book of Chronicles, extending from the division of the kingdom to the decree of Cyrus, authorising the return of the exiles and confining itself to the affairs of the kingdom of Judah. The present chapter includes the proposal of the people to Rehoboam (vers. 1-5); the counsel given to him (vers. 6-11); and the answer that provokes the revolt (vers. 12-19). This corresponds to 1 Ki. xii. 1-19 [*Murphy*].

Vers. 1-5.—*Proposal to the people.* Shechem, a judicious step, meeting there not simply because central and convenient, but honouring the capital of Ephraimites and removing disaffection. *King*, assembled to receive Rehoboam as lawful king and join in usual acclamations (1 Sam. x. 24; 1 Ki. i. 39) [*cf. Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 2. *Jer.* an Ephraimite appointed by Solomon to civil administration of house of Joseph (1 Ki. xi. 28), of which Ephraim a branch. Cause of flight to Egypt given (1 Ki. xi. 29-40). He returned to be leader and spokesman of people. Ver. 4. *Yoke*, pomp and style of Solomon made taxation heavy. Vast building operations required forced labour, &c. *Ease*, grant relief, make concessions, most reasonable request.

Vers. 6-11.—*Counsel given to the king.* *Old men* who served under Solomon and well

able to advise. Ver. 7. *Spake*, yield to will of people, for once be *servant*, be ruled by them and attach to thyself *servants for ever*. Ver. 8. *Forsook*, refused good words, consulted younger advisers, who gave counsel more flattering and agreeable to king's temper.

Vers. 12-19.—*Little finger*. Proverbial for increasing rather than diminishing burdens. "Finger not in original; but may be safely implied. The meaning is, 'You shall find my hand heavier on you than my father's; as much heavier as if my little finger were thicker than his loins'" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Whips*, often with sharp bones or pieces of lead tied to end. *Scorpions*, i.e., scourges with sharp points (Latin *scorpio*), "iron thorns" inflicting exquisite pain. Harsh and foolish answer. Ver. 15. *Cause*, i.e., the turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfil his word (1 Ki. ii. 29-31). Ver. 16. *What portion?* Words of sedition by Sheba (2 Sam. xx. 1), expressing deep-rooted aversion to royal house and resulting in open rebellion. Ver. 18. *Adoram*, identified by some with Ad. of 1 Ki. iv. 6; v. 14; and Adoram of 2 Sam. xx. 24. "The three names mark three distinct persons, perhaps of same family, who were respectively contemporary with David, Solomon, and Rehoboam" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Sent* to alleviate burdens. *Stoned*, usual mode of mob vengeance. Ver. 18. King himself narrowly escaped the same fate. From that time *Israel* and *Judah* separated and distinguished one from another.

HOMILETICS.

THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY.—*Verses 1-5.*

I. The place of meeting. "Shechem" wisely chosen by Rehoboam, to remove dissatisfaction; at the advice of judicious men, whose counsels he afterwards rejected. A place of great antiquity, noted for conventions (Jos. xxiv. 1) and royalty (Judg. ix.). **II. The purpose in view.** The future government of the nation. 1. *To make Rehoboam king.* King with officers of state around; tribes drawn up under their leaders ready to receive him. How proclaimed? Not with hearty shouts of "God save the king." A pause and solemn silence. Jeroboam steps forward! 2. *To represent the people.* "Make our yoke lighter and we will serve thee." This unexpected; surprised and annoyed Rehoboam; not what he came for, not what he liked! Not bold enough to deny, not grace enough to concede. Delay dangerous, may breed suspicion and intensify ill-feeling. **III. The conclusion arrived at.** "Come again unto me after three days." King did not commit himself to rash impromptu reply. Adjournment might seem wise, but demands just, prompt redress would have been better than prudent caution. "There is a gift whose recompense is double" (Ecclus. xx. 10).

THE FOOLISH RULER AND THE REVOLTING TRIBES.—*Verses 6-19.*

The four scenes may be treated separately or in one sketch. **I. The grievance stated.** Real, not imaginary; outspoken and not kept back. "The grievous servitude of thy father and his heavy yoke that he put upon us." 1. *A reasonable demand.* Couched in a spirit of fairness and loyalty. Reason and justice will ever triumph. Violence and storms spend themselves for nothing. (a.) *Heavy taxes.* Splendour of Solomon's court, the magnitude of his undertakings, such that neither tribute of dependent states, presents of foreign princes, nor profits of commercial enterprises could support. He was obliged to levy taxes for necessary revenue. (b.) *Forced service.* This chief ground of complaint (cf. 1 Ki. iv. 6; v. 13, 14; xi. 28). Each tribe called upon to render without payment. "Forced labour has been among the causes leading to insurrection in many ages and countries. It alienated the people of Rome from the last Tarquin (Liv. i. 56); it helped to bring about the French revolution, and it was for many years one of the principal grievances of the Russian serfs" [*Speak. Com.*]. (c.) *Long endured.* "Put upon us by thy

father." Complaint of past reign. Solomon wise, but oppressive in government. "No man can always be wise," says Pliny. We are more apt to copy the defects of our ancestors than imitate their virtues; to remember the evil of their lives, not their benefits. 2. *A national demand.* It was the voice of "all Israel." The people unanimous; not a few merely turbulent and dissatisfied. Thus was prophecy fulfilled. "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; he will take your sons, &c." (1 Sam. viii. 11-18). **II. The consultation held.** If impolitic to delay, it was prudent to seek advice. 1. *With aged counsellors.* Wise, experienced, and suitable. "How do ye advise?" "With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding." Be kind, concede, speak good words, and they will be thy servants for ever. Advice—(a), just; (b), timely; (c), far-seeing; and (d), wise. Happy the ruler with such statesmen! No sentimentalists, but true patriots and philosophers! Kindness wins and overcomes. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." 2. *With young counsellors.* Conceited, proud, and inexperienced. They recommend oppression and defiance. Yield nothing, put more on, afflict with scorpions. This considered spirited and kingly! but (a), unreasonable; (b), foolish; (c), cruel; and (d), destructive. "Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction." **III. The decision given.** "The king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave" (ver. 13). This—1. *Unexpected.* Demands reasonable; ease and make yoke "lighter." Delay gave time to think, and this course resolved upon! 2. *Foolish.* Rough words unbecoming; display weakness, ignorance, and pride. A grain of wisdom would have taught that such conduct would widen the breach between him and his people. 3. *Presumptuous.* Kings made to serve, not to tyrannise; should rule for the good of the people and not for selfish purposes. The way to govern is to serve. Those kings safest who stoop lowest. "I would rather be king of the French than king of France," said Louis XIV., *i.e.*, rule in the hearts of the people than over the territories of the kingdom. "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all." 4. *Mischievous.* This tone like that of the nobility of France before the great revolution, calculated to irritate (*cf.* the Ephraimites, Judg. xii. 1-4; men of Israel and Judah, 2 Sam. xix. 41-43; and the harsh words of Eliphaz, Job xxii. 5), to add fuel to the fire. Mischievous in themselves and in results. "How many thousand souls are hurt every day by the words of others!" [*Baxter*]. How sad the result here! "The beginning of the words of the mouth is foolishness: and the end of talk is mischievous" (Ecclus. xi. 13). **IV. The results which followed** (ver. 16). Whatever ground for resisting before, they now receive provocation, which accounts for strong words and firm resolve. 1. *Revolt.* Threatened, insulted, they raised a shout expressive and well understood. "To your tents, O Israel!" 2. *Resistance.* Hadoram sent, the man who was "*over the levy*" (Rev. Vers.) of forced labourers, whose presence would rouse Israel to anger, exasperate, and outrage. A foolish and imprudent act. "Israel stoned him with stones, that he died." 3. *Final separation* (ver. 19). God prevented the king from filling the land with blood. "It was with one exception (Hadoram) a bloodless revolt" [*Stanley*]. The attempt to recover lost tribes forbidden. The determination of king, the loyalty and number of Judah and Benjamin of no avail. The thing was done and could not be altered. The army disbanded and submitted to the God of battles. "For the cause was of God, that the Lord might perform his word." Even if right appear on our side, better sit still than fight in disobedience to God. When God's will is known ever submit, whatever loss may be involved.

THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE WORKING.—*Verse 15.*

The cause, the Hebrew circuit, or turning about, was of God; for here was a "wheel within a wheel, as Ezek. i." [*Trapp*]. The original idea of the disruption was that it was a divine dispensation. "The thing was from the Lord." "It was as much a part of the divine economy of the national destinies, as the erection of the monarchy itself, or as the substitution of the House of David for the House of Saul" [*Stanley*]. **I. Events of history controlled and directed to accomplish divine purposes.** God's will supreme and ultimate. "The turn of events" not aimless and independent. The current directed, *turned*, according to God's pleasure and word. **II. In the accomplishment of divine purposes men act as free agents.** Neither the folly of the king, nor rebellion of people pre-ordained. Events from natural order. Men not *fated*, but *free* to act; are under moral, not physical government. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." **III. Men thus acting as free agents are responsible for their actions.** We are not subjects of accidents, bereft of power to do good or evil, but morally responsible for our actions. The hands of the Jews were *wicked* in crucifying Christ, though he was delivered up to them "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts ii. 23). Those who rebel against God and lose heaven will have to blame themselves for wilfulness and folly.

TWO METHODS OF TREATING MEN.—*Verses 6-11.*

I. The conciliatory. **II.** The unconciliatory. Social positions are graduated. Yet no elevation of social rank gives one man the right to tyrannise over another. Pass in rapid review a few of the cases in which the two methods of treating men come into constant operation. The maintenance of a conciliatory policy is quite consistent with a headship. 1. Firmness; 2. Justice. What is the cure for all false relations among men? The gospel of reconciliation [*Beecher*].

GOVERNMENTS AND SUBJECTS.

From the whole narrative learn—**I. That governments create dissatisfaction among their subjects by injustice.** Order, contentment, and affection essential to prosperity in government. Severe laws, over-taxation, curtailment of liberties, and coercive measures create uneasiness and opposition. "The government of a prudent man is well ordered" (Eccles. x. 1). **II. That it is right for subjects to agitate for the removal of injustice.** Within right to get redress in just and legal methods. History abounds, in critical and stirring times, in witnesses against oppression and tyranny. Wrong to submit to despotisms. "I know how to add sovereign to the king's person, but not to his power," said Pym. **III. That it is wise for rulers to listen to the complaints of injustice.** Concessions more becoming than extravagant assertions of "divine right." Mild and merciful procedure quickens the spirit of freedom: destroys jealousy towards a ruler's actions and character, and the best safeguard of thrones and constitutions. "When a king speaks 'good words,' they seem to be better than if spoken by other lips; when a king is kind, he seems to add to his kindness by his very kingliness; the stoop of his condescension redoubles the value of his benefaction. If when the people returned after three days Rehoboam had spoken so, the welkin would have rung with the resonant cheers of a delighted, thankful, because emancipated, people" [*Dr. Parker*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-12. *Rehoboam the headstrong.* Only son of Solomon, but did not profit by his father's wisdom. 1. *His training.* Not like that of his father. (a) His mother an idolatress (2 Chr. xii. 13), not the wise, good mother which Solomon seems to have had (Prov. iv. 3). Hence the mother's influence over the young prince. (b) He had not the good example which Solomon had in David. Solomon's later years degenerate, what wonder if his son was far behind! 2. *His accession.* Without difficulty (cf. 1 Ki. xi. 43) at the death of his father, when about 41 years old. (a) By promise of perpetual sovereignty to David's posterity; (b) By public assembly of representatives. "Met not to exercise right of election (1 Sam. x. 19-21); for after God's promise, their duty was submission to the authority of rightful heir; but their object was to renew the conditions to which their constitutional kings were subject (1 Sam. x. 25), and to the omission of rehearsing which, under the peculiar circumstances in which Solomon was made king, they were disposed to ascribe the absolutism of his government" [Jamieson]. 3. *His trouble.* Kings not without. "Uneasy is the head that wears the crown." (a) A corrupt empire; (b) A dissatisfied people; (c) A dark future. 4. *His folly.* Wisdom not inherited as wealth. Some infatuated, nothing can teach them. Men have no right to tyrannise in social, political, or religious affairs. The rough answer was a fearful mistake. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Vers. 2, 3, and 12-15. *Jeroboam the first king of Israel.* 1. *His early life.* Jeroboam (whose people is many) "son of Nebat," an Ephrathite, i.e., belonging to territory of Ephraim; of Zereda (2 Chr. iv. 17; cf. Judg. v. 22), a town near Scythopolis. Mother Zeruah, a widow, reduced by the execution of her husband at beginning of Solomon's reign, if Jeroboam be identical with Shemei (cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 5;

cf. 1 Ki. ii. 46). 2. *His natural ability.* "A mighty man of valour" (1 Ki. xi. 27); mighty in power as Nimrod (Gen. x. 8); in wealth, as Boaz, Kish, and other Israelites (Ruth ii. 1; 1 Sam. ix. 1; 2 Ki. xv. 20). But clever, of strong natural capacity; active and enterprising (*Sept.* a man of works). 3. *His rapid promotion.* Solomon discerning his talents, "seeing the young man that he was industrious, that he did the king's business (Dan. viii. 27), made him ruler; set him over all the charge, the burden;" superintendent of taxes and public works (1 Ki. xi. 27, 28). "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule" (Prov. xii. 24; xxii. 29). 4. *His prophetic designation.* By prophet Ahijah in symbolic action (1 Ki. xi. 29-39). From which time he became a marked man by Solomon. 5. *His seditious conduct.* Ambitious, impatient for the death of Solomon, he was led to plot and conspire, and in consequence driven to Egypt. Chosen of God, yet could not wait for Providence. Incurred penalty of death by rebellion. 6. *His accession to the throne.* Chosen at length by people and permitted to become first king of Israel.

Ver. 7. *Be kind.* The power of kindness in winning affection and service. Lenity and moderation in a prince is very prevalent with the people, as to win their affections at first, so to hold them in obedience ever after. The advice of an ancient French counsellor to his sovereign at his departure from court was good. Being wished to lay down some general rules for government, he took a paper, and wrote on the top of it "moderation," in the middle of the leaf "moderation," and at the bottom "moderation" [Trapp].

Vers. 6-11. I. *The national council.* 1. Assembled and consulted by the king; 2. Composed of old and young, wise and foolish men. II. *The resolution adopted.* 1. From whom it came; 2. What its nature; 3. What its results. *Forsook old men*, whom he consulted for fashion's sake, as Xerxes did when he invaded Greece. Resolved

beforehand to stand upon his *pantoufles* and not at all to stoop to the people.

He had those about him, doubtless, that would tell him, as some Court parasites did our King John, when he had yielded to the requests of his barons for the subjects' liberty, that now he was "a king without a kingdom, a lord without a dominion, and a subject to his subjects" [*Trapp*]. *Consulted young men*. So did our king Richard II., to his utter ruin. So Xerxes despised the grave counsel of his uncle Artabanus, and was led wholly by young Mardonius to the loss of all. The like is reported of Dionysius, king of Sicily; Cræsus, king of Lydia; Nero, emperor of Rome; James that reigned in Scotland in Edward IV.'s time; and Lantrer, of whom it is reported that he lost the kingdom of Naples from the French king, his master, and all that he had in Italy, because he would not ask nor follow the advice of those who were wiser than himself [*Ibid.*].

Vers. 12-15. *The adjourned meeting*. 1. The decision given. Haughty and imperious. 2. The effect produced. (a) On the aged counsellors; (b) On

deputies; (c) On the nation [adapted from *Bib. Mus.*].

Ver. 16. *To your tents, O Israel*. "It was a national watchword, and not the war-cry of a single tribe which led the revolt" [*Stanley*]. 1. Its antiquity. Raised in time of David, now with fatal effect (2 Sam. xx. 1). 2. Its ingratitude. What have we to do with David? 3. Its selfishness. Cut themselves off from their brethren and their sovereign. To your tents, let us have a king of our own!

Vers. 16-19. *The great secession*. 1. Its strange beginning. 2. Its remarkable progress. 3. Its fatal consequences. Two kingdoms; rival worship. Weakness, jealousy, and political decline of Jewish nation. Terrible is progress of strife. One angry word, one look of revenge, one act of resentment, will kindle a fire which may set a neighbourhood or a nation into flame. A drop of revenge soon becomes a river, and the river a torrent, which sweeps everything before it. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water. Therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER X.

Vers. 6-10. *Counsel*. Judge Buller, when in the company of a young gentleman of sixteen, cautioned him against being led astray by the example or persuasion of others, and said: "If I had listened to the advice of some of those who called themselves my friends when I was young, instead of being a judge of the King's Bench, I should have died long ago a prisoner at the King's Bench."

Vers. 12-15. *Answered*. Who knows what he is till he is tried, and until he meets his own trial? for every one is not discovered in the same way; he

may be firm in one peril and fail in another [*Jay*]. His friends were summoned on a point so nice, to pass their judgment and to give advice; but fixed before, and well resolved was he, as those who ask advice are wont to be [*Pope*].

Vers. 16-19. When any one person or body of men seize into their hands the power in the last resort, there is properly no longer a government, but what Aristotle and his followers call the abuse and corruption of one [*Swift*].

CHAPTER XI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Rehoboam forbidden to war (vers. 1-4). This section a repetition in abbreviated form of 1 Ki. xii. 21-24. Remainder of chapter new matter. Rehoboam fortifies many towns (vers. 5-12); receives accessions from Israel (vers. 13-17); and takes many wives and concubines (vers. 18-23).

Vers. 1-4.—*The forbidden war.* Fight to crush the rebellion. *Fourscore thousand* about one-third of Judah's number under Joab's levy (2 Sam. xxiv. 9). *Shem.* (1 Ki. xii. 22-24); all Israel in Judah and Benjamin now united together.

Vers. 5-12.—*Defensive measures.* Jerusalem, a judicious step, unlike northern kings, who shifted their capital. *Built*, repaired and fortified; fifteen given. *Beth., Et., and Tek.* near together, a little south of Jericho, on way to Hebron. Ver. 7. *Beth-zur*, a strong position about five miles north of Hebron, on route between that place and Jerusalem. It played an important part in the wars of the Maccabees (1 Mac. iv. 29-61; vi. 7-26, &c.) [*Speak. Com.*]. *Shoca*, now Sumeikeh, three-and-a-half hours south-west of Jerusalem. *Adul* (Josh. xv. 35). Ver. 8. *Gath.* Exact site not known. *Mares.* (Josh. xv. 44). Its importance appears in the invasion of Zerah (ch. xiv. 9); and from 1 Mac. v. 66; 2 Mac. xii. 35. Modern name *Marash.* *Ziph.* Two of this name in Judah (Josh. xv. 24-55). This famous in David's history (1 Sam. xxiii. 14-24; xxvi. 2-25). Exact site appears to be the modern *Til Zif*, about three miles south of Hebron [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 9. *Ador., Adora* or *Dora*, now *Dura*, west of Hebron (Josh. xv. 24). *Lackish*, now *Um-Lakish.* *Azekah* (Josh. x. 10). Ver. 10. *Zor.* (1 Chr. ii. 53), now *Surah*; and *Aij.*, now *Yalo*, further north than other cities here mentioned. Both in territory originally assigned to Dan (Josh. xix. 41, 42), but afterwards absorbed into Judah [*Speak. Com.*]. *Judah and Benjamin.* now the designation of southern kingdom (cf. vers. 12 and 23). Ver. 11. *Oil*, odoriferous; *wine*, sweet, used by ancient Jews and modern Arabs; healthy and useful in hot climates (cf. Ps. civ. 15).

Vers. 13-17.—*Accessions.* *Left*, ejected from their office because they would not minister to Jeroboam's calves, who appointed priests not Levites. *Suburbs* (cf. Num. xxxv. 1-8). *High places, i.e., Dan and Bethel* (cf. 1 Ki. xii. 28-33); a kind of contemptuous description as not equal to temple at Jerusalem, only on a level with those in other parts. Ver. 15. *Devils*, a term sometimes used for idols in general (Lev. xvii. 7); here applied distinctively to the goat-deities, which were probably worshipped chiefly in the northern parts of the kingdom, where the heathen Canaanites still abounded [*Jamieson*]. Ver. 17. *Strengthened* by numbers and moral tone of excellent subjects; but sad change noted in king next chapter.

Vers. 18-23. *Rehoboam's wives and children.* *Jerimoth* not given among legitimate sons of David, hence son of concubine. Read *David* and of *Abihail.* Mother as well as father of Mah. is given. *Daughter of E.,* probably "grand-daughter," since an actual daughter of E. must have been too old to be a fit wife for Rehoboam. Ver. 20. *Daughter,* grand-daughter of Abs. (cf. ch. xiii. 2). Ver. 21. *Threescore* (cf. Cant. vi. 8 and 2 Chr. xiii. 21). Ver. 22. *Chief*, though not eldest of his sons. Affection for M. led him to violate the law. *Wisely*, prudently with calculation (Ex. i. 10). *Many wives.* Rehoboam careful to please his sons by making them governors of fortresses, and "sought for them a multitude of wives" (marg.); perhaps from cities over which they were set. In Persia and Turkey, younger princes, until lately, were shut up in the harem during their father's lifetime; and to prevent competition, were blinded or killed when their brother ascended the throne. In former country the old practice of dispersion through the country, like Rehoboam, has been again revived [*Jamieson*].

HOMILETICS.

THE RESTRAINTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.—Verses 1-4.

Events concerning kingdom of Judah chiefly given after revolt of ten tribes. Rehoboam determined to enter disaffected provinces; but divine decree gone forth, the army overawed, dispersed, and the king obliged to submit.

I. Restraints unmistakably clear. "The word *came* to Shem.," and was *spoken* "unto Rehoboam." Prophets gave no uncertain sound in either kingdom. Divine interposition most clear. No visions, no voices now; but around and in us as we fight in life, a power above the wiles and schemes of men, secret, invisible influences, deep impressions, and mysterious thoughts, amounting almost to divine revelations, to check or prompt. "Thou shalt not go up." **II. Restraints merciful in design.** "Nor fight against your brethren." Nations and tribes bound by natural ties; *man-kinned* (mankind) should help each other. "Quarrel with your faults and not with our fellow-men," was the motto of Otho II., Emperor of Germany. "Man's inhumanity to man" is great. If Alexanders, Caesars, and Napoleons were not restrained, the world would become a pandemonium. God careful of human life and human weal, prevents disgrace, mischief, and bloodshed. Men seek to destroy peace, injure reputation and property. "Revenge is wild justice," says Bacon. "Say not thou I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord and he shall save thee." **III. Restraints timely made.** God times events and interpositions; permits much show and great progress, as in Jeroboam's preparations. Why restrained when army assembled, everything ready and about to march with every prospect of success? Has God been consulted? Education, preparations, and enterprises of no avail, if not for him. A thousand forces may be enlisted, simply to be sent home again! We may form our programme, set an object in view, adapt our means and arrange time to attain it. Just when attainment near, lo! deprivation, disappointment. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." **IV. Restraints implicitly heeded.** The prophet represented God. The event could not be changed. "They hearkened," disband, and went home. Another power beside Judah and Israel must be recognised. Folly to resist, to fight against God! Motives, arguments, to acquiesce in arrangements of Providence are unanswerable. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth," but "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker."

DEFENSIVE MEASURES.—Verses 5-12.

Rehoboam forbidden to aggress, undertakes to defend the frontiers of his kingdom. "He *built* cities for defence." The verb denotes fortification of cities; "partly," says Hengstenberg, "because in the case of a city already in existence, the building must necessarily have been restricted to the fortification of it, and partly because the term city, in its fullest extent, involves the idea of fortification." **I. He protected against great dangers.** 1. *From the attack of Israel.* Disruption of tribal unity brought danger and enemies within. Israel restless and allied with Egypt. 2. *From Egyptian bondage.* From this quarter greatest danger. Out of fifteen cities all but three, on southern or western frontier. "And now, for the first time since the Exodus, Judah was once more threatened with an Egyptian bondage" [Stanley]. **II. He displayed great wisdom.** 1. *In retaining the capital.* "Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem" (ver. 5). Unlike kings of Israel, who shifted their capital from place to place for convenience and policy, he perceived importance of retaining hold on the city of David. This central fortress surrounded by a chain of fortresses, in part to carry out the designs of his father, in part to increase his strength. 2. *In fortifying the kingdom.* Reduced by secession, he sought to keep what he possessed. He rebuilt, garrisoned, and provided with arms and stores to stand a siege. If we cannot attack, we can perhaps build; if not recover lost privileges, we may defend what we have. "That good thing (goodly deposit) which was committed unto thee, keep (*guard*, cf. 1 Tim. vi. 20) by the

Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i. 14). **III. He illustrated great principles.** Under these measures are hidden powerful principles in human life. 1. *The power of conscience.* Accused of doing wrong, he now fears further mischief. A guilty conscience gives timidity, creates a panic, and expects retaliation when "no man pursueth." "Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind." 2. *The tendency to aggressive war.* Jeroboam took similar precautions to Rehoboam (1 Ki. xii. 25). Kings ambitious and plunge into war. "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife." Who can tell the strifes and wars thus created?

"Towns turned to ashes, fanes involved in fire!
These deeds the guilt of rash ambition tell."

2. *Lack of faith in God.* This leads to self-sufficiency, mischievous enterprises and failure. In personal salvation and national deliverances, weak is an arm of flesh. "Some remember (trust, glory in remembrance of) chariots, and some remember horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. xx. 7).

CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES.—Verses 13-17.

Jeroboam, afraid of reunion of the tribes, took measures to make separation final. He introduced calf-worship in Bethel and Dan, two distinct places at opposite ends of his kingdom. He selected priests from the lowest of the people, thus weakened his kingdom and caused many worthy men to migrate to Judah, who, faithfully attached to the worship of Jehovah, could not conscientiously bow to idols. **I. In refusing to worship idols.** They remembered the injunction, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor worship them." Daniel's companions were steadfast. **II. In braving the results of their conduct.** The wrath of the king, and the ridicule of the tribes; ejection from their office, persecution and exile. "The emperor commands thee to do sacrifice," said the Proconsul to Cyprian; "therefore consult for thy welfare." "I am a Christian," was the heroic reply; "and I cannot sacrifice to your gods; do, therefore, what you are commanded; as for me, in so just a cause there needs no consultation." **III. In seeking to worship God according to conscience.** They desired a purer worship and sought a more convenient place; left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem. (Pilgrim Fathers.) In the conduct of these priests and people we have—1. *A conscience to acknowledge.* Some in authority do not recognise it. Conscience the vicegerent of God, omnipotent, can never be crushed. Kings may control movements of body, but never alter convictions of soul. Neither fraud nor force can make good men disobey behests of conscience. 2. *A precedent to follow.* Men may urge customs of the people and fashions of the nation; expediency and personal obligations to superiors; the dangers of singularity and terrible penalty of our choice, but we must be faithful: "Dare to do right." "We ought to obey God rather than men."

THE STRENGTH AND ATTRACTION OF A KINGDOM.—Verses 3 and 13-17.

I. In the unity of its subjects. By blood Benjamin more closely related to Ephraim than Judah. All traditions of Benjamin antagonistic to Judah. Now estrangement and feud ceased. Religious and political capital established on border line. Two tribes unite, and prepare for defence. Danger unites all ranks together. (Elizabeth and Spanish Armada.) **II. In the purity of its worship.** Benjamin attached to temple worship. Priests and Levites migrated in large numbers to the southern kingdom for purer worship and

safety. Recognition of God greater security than armies and fleets; moral vigour more attractive than extensive trade. **III. In the righteousness of its rule.** Wise to strengthen cities and defend forts; better to consolidate the throne in rectitude. Numbers give physical strength, but just concessions and righteous laws support and safeguard the nation. Jeroboam's kingdom weakened, Rehoboam's strengthened.

THE FAMILY AND DOMESTIC POLICY OF REHOBOAM.—Verses 18-23.

Danger past, indulgence began. The domestic policy of Rehoboam might be worldly wise, but it was sinful. **I. The family was founded in disobedience to God.** The royal harem inferior to his father's, equally in violation of the law. 1. *In multiplying wives.* (a) For himself; (b) For his sons. Wives not strangers, but daughters of Israel, and of family of David, yet forbidden. "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself." 2. *In choice of a favourite son.* He set aside eldest son, preferred Abijah in fondness for his mother. Solomon had divine warrant, but in destining youngest for kingdom the king violated the law (Deut. xxi. 15, 16). "They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not." **II. The family was governed by worldly policy.** "He dealt wisely"—i.e., with deep and calculating policy (Ex. i. 10). "Rehoboam's wisdom was shown— 1. In dispersing his other sons instead of allowing them to remain together in Jerusalem, where they might have joined in a plot against Abijah, as Adonijah and his brothers did against Solomon (1 Ki. i. 5-10). 2. In giving his sons positions which might well content them, and prevent them from being jealous of Abijah" [*Speak. Com.*]. Rivalry prevented, public peace and safety secured, not by worldly sagacity and bestowment of patronage. Trust in God and loyalty to his commands the best policy.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 13-16. *The duty of Protestants.* This will lead me to set before you—I. The conduct of Protestants in that day. 1. In it they bore testimony against the reigning abominations; 2. They steadfastly adhered to the service of their God; 3. They renounced all for conscience sake. II. Our duty as Protestants at the present day. 1. We should realise our own religious principles; 2. We should show their superior efficacy to sanctify the heart and life. Address those (1) Who are conforming to this world; and (2) Those who are like the Israelites, setting their hearts fully to seek the Lord their God [*C. Simeon*].

Ver. 16. 1. God the object of search. The sublimest and most needful in creation. The foundation of all religion and strength. 2. The search sincere. Heart, all the heart thrown

into it. 3. The search steadfast. The heart fixed, determined, purposed. No hesitancy, wandering, and half-heartedness. "*Qui tradiderunt cor suum*, who delivered up their hearts to seek the Lord; to run any hazard rather than violate conscience. Such were the English exiles in Queen Mary's days, from whom Stephen Gardiner vowed so to stop sending of all supplies that for very hunger they should eat their own nails, and then feed on their fingers' ends; but 'threatened folk live long,' and before these banished men were brought to that bill of fare, the Bishop was eaten up of worms" [*Trapp*].

These verses describe the condition of the northern kingdom in Jeroboam's time. 1. Disgraced by calf-worship. 2. Lacking the principal thing. Seats of worship, no true sanctuaries, for the ark, the symbol of God's presence

wanting. Not "the house of God," but "a house of high places." 3. Weakened by emigration. Innovations drove the best from the country. The king went from bad to worse.

Ver. 17. *Three years, &c. Temporary Religion.* This a brief description of the spirit of his reign. I. *Period of profession.* By apostasy of ten tribes, and the belief that the thing proceeded from God as a punishment for Solomon's idolatry, the king brought to reflection and obedience. This only temporary. When kingdom sufficiently fortified, and he thought himself secure, he forsook the law of Jehovah, and all Israel with him (ch. xii. 1). Many fall away, some before, and others after three years of profession. "Ye did run well, who did hinder?" II. *The period of apostasy.* In prosperity or security. When no dangers nigh. In heart unfaithful, though external worship un-

disturbed (ch. xii. 28). High places, monumental stones and idols, disfigured the land. Apostasy more grievous than before. The first three years walked in the way of David; in the fourth year, decline which neutralised all advantages of immigration, and in the fifth year punishment by invasion and success of Shishak (xii. 2). Such the course of life!

Vers. 18-22. *A Family Record.* In which we find—1. Kindred mixed together. All three wives of David's family, and his own kindred. 2. Partiality displayed. "Rehoboam loved Maachah" (ver. 22) for beauty or conformity to his wicked practices. 3. Numbers in abundance. "Eighteen wives and threescore concubines, and begat twenty-and-eight sons and threescore daughters." The family a divine institution, should be the best of kingdoms and a type of heaven.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1-5. *Ye shall not go.* Little can we at the beginning of an action guess at God's intention at the conclusion [*Bishop Hall*]. It is one of the greatest praises of God's wisdom that he can turn the evil of men to his own glory [*Ibid.*].

Vers. 13-15. *Worship cast off.* Whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right [*Burke*]. We never do evil so thoroughly and cordially as when we are led to it by a false principle of conscience [*Pascal*].

"Not thou, O Lord, from us, but we
Withdraw ourselves from thee"
[*French*].

Vers. 14-16. *Left, &c.* The good men in a kingdom counteract the tendency to anarchy and disruption. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." The guarantee of a nation's progress and stability is to be found, not in the invincibility of its armies, not in the vastness of its commerce, not in the genius, the learning, or the wealth of its citizens, but in the sound morality and religious sentiment of the people [*Dr. Thomas*].

CHAPTER XII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter parallel with 1 Ki. xiv. 21-31, but considerably enlarges the narrative contained in that passage. The account of Shishak's chariots and horsemen, the composition of his army, the warning and the promise of Shemaiah are wholly new features [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-12.—*The invasion of Shishak.* Forsook, details in Kings. *All Is., i.e.,* all Judah and Benjamin—all Israelites of these tribes. *Shishak* (Shishonk), first king of 22nd or Bubastic dynasty, which, after the fall of Thebes from proud position of capital, 990 B.C., succeeded to the sovereignty of the whole country [*Jam.*]. *Came* to resent provocation or carry out ambitious design, with great number of foreign auxiliaries. *Ver. 3. Libim,* Libyans west of Egypt (*cf.* ch. xvi. 8; Neh. iii. 9). *Suk.,* called *Troglodytes*, cave-dwellers, by Sept. Some think they are Semitic Arabs, dwellers in tents. *Ethiop.,* Heb. *Cushim,* from south of Egypt. *Ver. 4. Fenced* (ch. xi. 5-12), fortified with so much trouble. *Shem.* (ch. xi. 2). The message not in Kings; addressed to Rehoboam and princes while Shishak before Jerusalem. *Ver. 6. Humbled,* bowed themselves (chs. vii. 14; xiii. 18; xxxii. 26). *Jehovah is just* (Ezra ix. 15; Neh. ix. 33). *Ver. 7. Some deliverance, i.e.,* deliverance in a little or short time (*cf.* Ezra ix. 8); respite from total destruction, yet tributary to Egypt. *Ver. 8. Know* the difference between God's rule and foreign yoke. *Vers. 9-11. Come up, &c.,* resumes description of attack upon Jerusalem. *Took* everything valuable. *Shields* borne like maces by owners or guard of the palace when they attended the King in public procession. *Ver. 12.* Instead of destruction, lit., *these were good words;* signs of national repentance and amendment; good things, purposes, and practices to which God had regard. "Ver. 12. Concludes the narrative, is additional to Kings and characteristic. It aptly terminates the writer's history of the invasion, which he has presented to us throughout in a strictly moral and didactic aspect" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 13-16.—*Rehoboam's reign and death.* *Strengthened,* new life and vigour after invasion; revival of religion and long reign. *Years,* on age of Rehoboam (*cf.* 1 Ki. xii. 8; xiv. 21). *Naamah,* probably a daughter of Nabash (1 Chr. xix. 1)* *Evil,* through unhappy influence of his mother, a heathen foreigner, he received a bias towards idolatry. *Prepared not,* fixed not; lacked earnestness and consistency. *Book,* refers to authorities of the reign of which he gives account. *Wars,* not open war, but incursions and skirmishes on borders for plunder.

HOMILETICS.

NATIONAL IDOLATRY AND NATIONAL PUNISHMENT.—*Verses 1-3 and 9-12.*

Rehoboam did not check introduction of heathen abominations. The lascivious worship of Ashtoreth allowed to exist by side of true religion. "Images" of Baal and fellow-divinities set up, and the worst corruptions tolerated. For fuller account see 1 Ki. xiv. 22-24. These evils punished and put down by terrible calamity of Egyptian invasion. **I. The national sins.** "They had transgressed against the Lord." 1. *In provoking him to jealousy.* God announced Himself to be "a jealous God" (Ex. xx. 5); a God "whose name is jealous." A figure of marriage, in which God, like a husband of his people, is provoked to jealousy by the unfaithfulness of his wife. A strong, suggestive term. 2. *In public worship of idols.* Altars and high places built, woods planted, gods and graven images publicly patronised in utter disobedience to God's command. 3. *In rapid spread of immorality.* "There were also Sodomites in the land." They did according to all the abominations of the nations, &c. (1 Ki. xiv. 24). Paramours consecrated to the gods, a degraded class who practised immorality, traded in wickedness under the sanction of religion. Judah's

abominations worse than former days. The splendour of the temple and the pomp of the priesthood; secular privileges and religious teachers restrained not. Their sins were grievous and universal; sins "above all that their fathers had done." **II. The national punishment.** Shishak, king of Egypt, incited by Jeroboam, or ambitious of conquest, invaded the land and humbled the nation in a successful campaign. 1. *The capital was disgraced.* Jerusalem entered and pillaged by a heathen army! A national disgrace for a city to be broken down, without walls or defence (Prov. xxv. 28; Neh. ii. 17). 2. *The cities were taken.* Places on which he spent such time and treasure to repair and defend. Great Canaanite towns and Levitical cities east and west of Jordan fell without a struggle. High towers and fortified places no defence against wickedness. "A man shall not be established by wickedness." 3. *The treasures carried away.* The palace and the temple robbed. The shields of gold and everything valuable taken away. Deep humiliation, grievous bondage the price of ignominious peace and the retribution of a watchful providence! "I also left you in the hand of Shishak."

THE BELEAGURED COURT.—Verses 5-8.

While Shishak was before the city, Rehoboam and the princes were deliberating in solemn assembly. Warned of sin and punishment, and spared on account of repentance. Notice—**I. The sins committed.** "Ye have forsaken me." This the *gravamen* of offence. Though possessing the temple and the priesthood, yet idolatry mixed with worship of Jehovah. Impure rites and unchecked licence. **II. The danger threatened.** 1. *Forsaken of God.* "Therefore have I also left you." Many would think this through negligence in preparations, impolicy in government. Bereft of strength and defence because God had forsaken them. 2. *Besieged by Shishak.* "In the hand of Shishak." A hand strong and oppressive. This a natural result. When God forsakes, we are unable to resist, and the enemy conquers. **III. The humiliation produced.** Calamity traced to national sins, repentance and contrition followed. When rebuked we should be humbled, justify God, and judge ourselves. "Even kings and princes must bend or brake before God, either be humbled or be ruined." **IV. The deliverance granted.** "I will grant them some deliverance." A short space was given for amendment, wrath was not poured out like a flood upon the city, yet suzerainty of Egypt had to be accepted. Punishment delayed, not escaped. Destruction of Jerusalem reserved for Nebuchadnezzar. Escape only through Christ and righteous conduct.

SHEMAIAH'S PREACHING.—Verses 7-12.

I. It was divinely taught in its matter. "The word of the Lord came to Shemaiah." Not truth from second-hand or traditional forms. The message not argument nor speculation; but simple, entire word of God. "The preaching that I bid thee" was the command to Jonah. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." **II. It was direct in its aim.** A simple, clear utterance, direct as an arrow to its end. Preaching toned down, lacks point, goes not from the heart to the heart. The end missed for want of vitality and definite aim. We must not merely arouse emotion to find vent in action; but preach to save sinners. Chrysostom's hearers admired and applauded; he rebuked and desired amendment of life. "Show your approbation by obedience; that is the only praise I seek." Massillon's hearers felt the word to "strike and stick." Peter's audience "were pricked to the heart" by his earnest appeal. **III. It was practical in its results.** Very

great and encouraging; illustrating the power of the Divine word faithfully preached. 1. *In the minds of the people.* Why not? Are there not laws in the moral, like chemical affinities in the natural world; between religious truth and the deepest feelings of the human heart? Where one is spoken, why should not the other respond? (a) *In acknowledgment of guilt.* "They said, The Lord is righteous." (b) *In contrition of spirit.* "They have humbled themselves." 2. *In the procedure of God.* (a) Divine decree revoked. "The wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy altogether." (b) Certain deliverance given. "I will grant them some deliverance." (c) Measure of prosperity restored. "Also in Judah things went well" (ver. 12). With results like these pulpit power will never decay. The revivals of Pentecost, of Whitfield and Wesley, may be accomplished again by right men. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet."

BRASS FOR GOLD, OR COUNTERFEIT PRINCIPLES.—Verses 9–11.

In the plunder of Egyptian king were "golden shields," splendid insignia of Solomon. Old court etiquette kept up notwithstanding its loss, on public and solemn occasions. Inferior metal replaced the gold. This typical of counterfeits in personal conduct, Christian worship, and Christian organisations. **I. Worthless profession instead of real piety in personal life.** Form of godliness without power. Profession "sounding brass or tinkling cymbal," hollow, vain, and useless. Professors degenerate in character, influence, and solid worth. "Thy silver is become dross." Worse even than this, for baser and harder metals express debased and degenerate life. "They are brass and iron" (Jer. vi. 28). **II. Idolatrous practices instead of pure worship of God.** Men exchange the glory of God for idols of gold and silver. The ritual takes the place of the spiritual. God is forgotten, and images and saints are adored; Mammon and the world worshipped. "They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man" (Rom. i. 23)—(The infinite, spiritual, and divine changed into something finite, material, and human). **III. False representations by which institutions hide their decline.** What folly for Rehoboam to carry shields of brass in customary procession! Vain and proud, he was anxious not to appear degraded by absence of gold shields! In churches deadness and divisions cannot be hidden by noise, numbers, and display. In kingdoms rottenness and decay will not be healed by bribery, court splendour, and successful war. "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!"

REHOBAM THE UNREADY.—Verse 12.

This is the summing-up of Rehoboam's life. He was not so bad as some, but did evil in various ways, not from design as from neglect. Evil effects of the father's sin and mother's idolatry seen in their son; yet another cause, viz., a want of heart. He was not thoroughly consecrated to worship of Jehovah. **I. He did not begin life with seeking the Lord.** 1. He was young, should have sought wisdom; but went to Shechem without prayer or sacrifice. That which commences without God will end in failure. 2. He leaned on counsellors, saying, "What advice give ye?" Of those counsellors, he chose worst, younger and prouder nobles. Those who reject divine wisdom generally refuse all other wisdom. 3. He committed great folly by threatening the people and refusing just demands; and that before he was accepted as their king. None of his father's wisdom. How can they act prudently and prosperously who are not guided of the Lord? **II. He showed no heart in**

seeking the Lord afterwards. 1. He obeyed the voice when the man of God forbade him to fight with Israel; yet afterward forsook the law (2 Chr. xii. 1). He is said to have been "young and tender-hearted," which means *soft* (2 Chr. xiii. 7). 2. He winked at most horrible crimes among people whom he ought to have judged (1 Ki. xiv. 24). 3. He fell into his father's sins. 4. He busied himself more for the world than for God. We hear nothing of his worship, but much of his building; nothing of his faith, but much of his fickleness (2 Chr. xi. 5-12). **III. He was not fixed and persevering in seeking the Lord.** 1. For three years loyalty to God made him prosper, by bringing better sort from calf worship into Judah (2 Chr. xi. 13-17), yet he forsook the Lord who prospered him. 2. He grew proud; and God handed him over to Shishak. 3. Humbled himself, was pardoned, yet stripped the Lord's house to buy off King of Egypt. 4. Wrought no great reforms, celebrated no great passover, yet owned "the Lord is righteous" (ver. 6). **IV. He had no care to seek the Lord thoroughly.** Yet no man good by accident; no one goes right without intention to do so. Without heart religion must die. 1. Human nature departs from the right way, especially in kings tolerated in more sin than others. 2. Courtiers usually run the wrong way, especially young, proud, and frivolous. Rehoboam lived gay and proud, and gave himself up to their lead. 3. Underlings apt to follow us and applaud if we go in an evil path, even as Judah followed Rehoboam. Thus those who should lead are led.

The kind of preparation required in diligent and acceptable seeking of the Lord. To feel and confess need in whole of life. Cry unto him for help and wisdom. Yield to his guidance and not follow counsel of vain persons. Be anxious to be right in everything, searching the Scriptures and seeking by prayer to know what to do. Serve the Lord carefully and earnestly, leaving nothing to chance, fashion, or whim. Are there any professors like Rehoboam? Any hopeful young men who lack whole-hearted devotion to the Lord? Any older men who have suffered for vacillation, hesitation, or double-mindedness? Any just escaped from such trouble, but are not firm and ready even now? Oh, for a clear sense of the evil and folly of such a condition! Oh, for the confirming power of the Holy Ghost! Oh, for vital reunion with the Lord Jesus [*Spurgeon*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Strong, and forsook the law.* No danger, no watchfulness. Prosperity leading to apostasy. In poverty men pray, in weakness and affliction attend God's house, &c. "Established" and "strengthened" leads to say, "Depart from us." "The prosperity of fools destroys them." *All Israel with him.* 1. The force of bad example. 2. The readiness of men to follow it. 3. The guilt of those who follow, when they should reprove. Example contagious; beneficially or perniciously men influence others; raise them up or bring them down. "Be not partaker of other men's sins."

Ver. 5. *Forsaken me.* Conditions of enjoyment, prosperity and success.

Awful results of abandonment by God. Prevalent corruption, deeper disgrace, and national disaster.

Ver. 7. *Humiliation the means of deliverance.* From the message which was sent them from the Lord we properly observe—I. That sin will surely bring the judgment of God upon us. Nor is there any possibility of escape but by repentance, since God has ordained—II. That sin, in order to its being forgiven, must be repented of. It is, however, no little consolation to know—III. That sin, truly repented of, shall assuredly be forgiven. Application—I. Have you repented? 2. Are you pardoned? [*C. Simeon, M.A.*]. *Wrath of God.* 1. Its reality. 2. Its

cause. 3. Its agencies. 4. Its suspense. In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy.

Ver. 8. *Know*. The discipline of punishment, or great contrasts. 1. Between the Theocracy, or rule of God, and foreign rule or "servants" of Shishak. 2. Between the freedom of Christ and the bondage of sin. 3. Between correction of providence and left alone in folly.

Ver. 12. *Went well*. 1. Many *good men* in general defection in whom good things were found (1 Ki. xiv. 13). 2. Many *good things*, in prevalent corruption. Temple, priesthood, sacrifices and ordinances. A few may be "the holy seed, the substance thereof," the preserving principle. Few in Sardis (Rev. iii. 4).

Ver. 14. *Prepared not*. Learn—1. That serving God will prevent from evil. 2. That for God's service the heart should be prepared and fixed. 3. That when the heart is not fixed or prepared men are easily drawn away. 4. That when men are drawn away from

God into evil, consequences are fearful. Weakness ensues, corruptions spread, temptations increase, enemies prevail, and ruin inevitable!

"And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast."

Ver. 15. *Book of Shem*. Not now extant, though God, if he had pleased, could as well have preserved those books for the use of the church, as he did the holy vessels of the temple from the spoil of Shishak [*Trapp*]. Providence and goodness of God in preserving and handing down Scriptures to our times. Why not lost, like many classic authors, amid the ruins of the barbarians? From the whole chapter we see—1. Rehoboam forsaking the law. 2. Rehoboam punished for his defection. 3. Rehoboam spared on repenting. 4. Rehoboam ruined at last for want of decision in religion [*Ing. Cobbin*].

"But evil is wrought for want of thought
As well as want of heart" [*Hood*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1. *Forsook*. A man cannot have been three years wise and then have returned to old courses without his return being marked by aggravations of evil. The last state of the man is worse than the first. "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." To have been halfway to heaven, and then to have been thrown down—what agonies of recollection! [*Dr. Parker*].

Vers. 5-8. *Shemaiah the prophet*. Ministers of the gospel should be gentle, tender, and affectionate. They should be kind in feeling and courteous in manner, like a father or mother. Nothing is ever gained by a sour, harsh, crabbed, dissatisfied manner. Sinners are never scolded either into duty or into heaven [*A. Barnes*]. I never was fit to say a word to a sinner except when I had a broken heart myself; when I was melted into penitency, and

felt as though I had just received pardon to my soul, when my heart was full of tenderness and pity [*Payson*].

Ver. 6. *Humbled themselves*.

"If hearty sorrow
Be a sufficient ransom for offence,
I tender it here; I do as truly suffer
As e'er I did commit" [*Shaks.*].

Ver. 8. *Servants*. It is not in man's nature to be out of all service, and to be self-dependent. We may choose our master, but God or mammon we must serve. We cannot possibly be in a neutral or intermediate state. Such a state does not exist. If we will not be Christ's servants we are forthwith Satan's, and Christ set us free from Satan only by making us His servants [*J. H. Newman*].

Ver. 10. *Shields of brass*.

"Thus men go wrong with an ingenious
skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own
crooked will,

And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
 First put it out, then take it for a guide "
 [Copper].

Ver. 12. *Things went well.* We are called upon to observe the relation and progress of events and to inquire into the moral reasons which explain either their ill-going or their happy advancement. We often speak of things going well in too narrow a sense, simply meaning that property increases, that health is continued, and that the whole outward environment is

comfortable and satisfactory. That is not a proper estimate of the whole question. Things can only go well when the heart goes well. When things do not go well we should inquire into moral reasons; why this affliction, why this loss, why this discontent? Out of such faithful self-dealing will come the humbleness, the penitence which are always followed by pardon, restoration, and spiritual harmony [Dr. Parker].

Ver. 15. *Wars.*

"Then time turns torment when man turns a fool" [Young].

CHAPTER XIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter parallel to 1 Ki. xv. 1-8. Abijah succeeds and wars against Jeroboam (vers. 1-4); declares the right of his cause (vers. 4-12); his victory and end (vers. 13-22).

Vers. 1-3.—*The opening war of Abijah.* Abijah, Abijam in Kings. Ver. 2. *Michaiah*, variation of Maachah (xi. 10; 1 Ki. xv. 2); daughter of Uriel and Tamar, daughter of Absalom. Hence called daughter, i.e., granddaughter of Absalom. Ver. 3. *War.* Probably Jeroboam sought to wrest whole country from Abijah. *Array*, i.e., took the field and began war. "The numbers are doubtless large, considering the smallness of the two kingdoms. It must be borne in mind, however, that Oriental armies are mere mobs, vast numbers accompanying the camp in hope of plunder; so that the gross numbers described as going upon the Asiatic expedition are often far from denoting the exact number of the fighting men. But in accounting for the large number of soldiers enlisted in the respective armies of Abijah and Jeroboam, there is no need of resorting to this mode of explanation; for we know, by the census of David, the immense amount of the population that was capable of bearing arms (2 Chr. xxi. 5; cf. ch. xiv. 8; xvii. 14) [Jamieson].

Vers. 4-12.—*Abijah's address to Jeroboam.* Ver. 4. *Zemaraim*, a mount not identified, amid the great range of Central Palestine; upon borders of the two kingdoms. Ver. 5. *Gave.* Divine right claimed, but conditions omitted (Ps. cxxxii. 12; lxxxix. 30-32). *Salt*, i.e., a covenant inviolable, irrevocable (Lev. ii. 13; Num. xviii. 19). Salt emblem of perpetuity. Ver. 6. *Rebelle.* Jeroboam upbraided as a usurper, and his subjects as rebels. Ver. 7. *Vain men*, i.e., "low fellows," "persons of the baser sort" (cf. Judg. ix. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 20). *Belial*, profitless and evil (Deut. xiii. 13). *Young*, i.e., new to his work, inexperienced. *Tender-hearted*, wanting in resolution and spirit. Ver. 8. Religious condition of two kingdoms now contrasted. Enemy proud of a *great multitude*, and with them *golden calves*, proofs of apostasy. Ver. 9. *Cast out* (ch. xi. 14). *Seven*, "a bullock and two rams" the offering required at original consecration of sons of Aaron (Ex. xxix. 1; Lev. viii. 2). It appears that Jeroboam, for reasons of his own, enlarged the sacrifice and required it at the consecration of every priest [Speak. Com.]. Ver. 10. Judah had pure and regular observance of ordinances of Moses. *Not forsaken.* God with them (only in a certain degree). They had daily sacrifice with all its accompaniments. Ver. 11. God himself their captain. Priests with their *trumpets* brought to war in remembrance of God's command (Num. x. 9), and example of Moses (Num. xxxi. 6). The war, therefore, sacred war.

Vers. 13-20.—*Abijah's victory. Ambush.* To surprise in front and rear; made while Abijah was haranguing. Ver. 14. *Cried.* A panic might have ensued if leaders had not looked to God and "sounded trumpets," which was a pledge of victory and help to the men (Num. x. 9; xxxi. 6). Judah responded, and the rush was resistless. Ver. 17. *Great slaughter.* Nothing in original to indicate this was all in one day. The writer is probably compressing into a few words the circumstances of the whole war [Speak. Com.].

Ver. 18. *Uder*. Humbled, defeated, not made tributary. Ver. 19. *Bethel*. Frontier town in which one of calves placed. *Towns*, villages or suburbs. Ver. 20. Defeat so great that Jeroboam did not recover in Abijah's time. He died in second year of Asa (1 Ki. xv. 25). *Struck*. Probably the message of the prophet Abijah (1 Ki. xiv. 10; xii. 15).

Vers. 21, 22.—*Abijah's end*. *Mighty*. "Took courage, grew bold," after security; like his father and grandfather, gave himself to indulgence and multiplied wives. Ver. 22. *Story*, commentary, "the midrash or memoir, which was extant in the time of the chronist, or the original form from which he drew his information" [*Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

ATTEMPT TO REVERSE DIVINE ARRANGEMENTS.—Verses 3-19.

God permitted revolt of ten tribes and Rehoboam forbidden to regain them (ch. x. 15). Frequent skirmishes between kings of Judah and Israel (ch. xii. 15). Jeroboam now takes advantage of Abijah's youth, and judging from the speech, claims the crown and invades the territory of Judah. No prophet forbade the war, Jeroboam had forfeited all claims to protection, his effort in vain, the Divine arrangements could not be upset. **I. An attempt most daring in its design.** "Now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord" (ver. 8). A kingdom not set up by men, but established and perpetuated by Divine decree in the house of David. The design indicates pride, presumption, and impiety. Might as well withstand, resist the rolling planet or the rising tide. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought (be overthrown); but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, &c." (Acts v. 39). **II. An attempt depending upon numbers for its success.** "Ye be a great multitude" (ver. 8). "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." "Behold the multitude melted away" in the armies of Xerxes, Sennacherib, and Napoleon, before the presence and purpose of God. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces." **III. The numbers employed in the attempt were men of worthless character.** The best soldiers, men of courage and character, generally selected for daring enterprises (Cromwell's Ironsides, Havelock's Saints). But the army of Jeroboam composed of worthless men. 1. *The king himself stained with ungodly actions.* Jeroboam an idolater and innovator in past. Now found rebelling against God and taking advantage of Abijah's youth, as he did of Rehoboam's weakness (ver. 8). 2. *The men employed were a mixed mob.* (a) "*Vain men*," loose in character and useless in war (Cataline's comrades). Plenty such now, "empty fellows," ready to join any cause, follow any leader who pays best. "I have not sat with vain persons." (b) *The children of Belial*, wicked men, hating all control and setting up any that would carry out their wishes. Abimelech hired "vain and light persons, which followed him" (Judges ix. 4). **IV. Hence the utter failure of the attempt.** "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah" (ver. 15). "When omnipotence goes forth to war, what can be the issue of the battle? When God takes the glittering sword, and his hand lays heavy in judgment, can grasshoppers stand before him?" "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord." Julian the Apostate could not falsify prediction. The word was uttered and the secession a fact. The powers of earth and hell could not change that. "For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." Hence beware "lest haply ye be found," in daily life and moral conduct, "even to fight against God."

A GREAT SPEECH.—Verses 4-13.

Abijah had entered the enemies' territory—stood upon eminence. Jeroboam's army at foot of the hill, and according to ancient custom Abijah harangued,

poured out invective and abuse upon the enemy and extolled his own merits.

I. Its claims concerning Judah. God recognised in the gift of the kingdom; in the worship of the temple, with its legal priesthood and regular sacrifices; in the warfare of life. "The Lord is our God and we have not forsaken him." He claims the right position and obeys the true commands. Conceptions of God affect doctrine and practice. Custom, law, and outward restraints may keep right in some things; but only feeling of dependence upon God, sense of responsibility to him and constant acknowledgment of him, will give security, strength, and dignity to inheritance.

II. Its accusations against Israel. Jeroboam a rebel and usurper, and must be put down. He was leading a revolutionary party, "sons of Belial." He had not the beauty and established order of worship, the legal priesthood; but golden calves, illegal and heathen priests, desecrated altars, and a hopeless cause. Abijah no usurper nor idolator! Whatever the corruptions of his kingdom, it was better than Israel, &c. Thus men may deny the power of religion and boast of its form—view themselves not in their defects and infirmities, but in their good qualities and virtues. In lofty and contemptuous tones recite their merits and condemn their adversaries. Trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others.

III. Its passionate appeal to the people. "O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers" (ver. 12). *Religion* is appealed to. God is concerned; the war sacred and religious. *History* appealed to. Abijah in historic line, they were cutting themselves off from its unity, currents, and privileges, and setting the God of their fathers at naught. *Humanity* appealed to; why engage in a fruitless war? "For ye shall not prosper." What folly, base ingratitude to fight against God!

A GREAT BATTLE.—Verses 13–20.

Jeroboam planning while Abijah speaking. Address unheeded. A detachment sent quietly round foot of the hill. Abijah and his men found themselves surrounded. Leaders "cried unto the Lord," Judah rallied, responded with a war-shout, which preserved from panic and led to victory.

I. Fought with unequal forces. 1. *Human aid* on one side. A proud king, immense multitudes, skill and generalship. 2. *God's presence* on the other side. Presence in temple, on field of battle, and with symbols of victory (Num. x. 9; xxxi. 6). No wise king enters upon war without due preparation to stand his ground, despite formidable odds. "What king going to make war against another king sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" Common sense should teach us not to *begin* any costly work without materials to *finish* it; not to undertake what we have neither strength nor will to achieve, nor that in which we are not prepared, if need be, to sacrifice life itself.

II. Fought for an impossible end. "For the cause was of God" (ch. x. 15). If the decree of Darius and the superscription of Pilate could not be altered, neither could the established fact, the fixed arrangements of God. All opposition abortive, can never set aside the plans and processes of Divine government, and will re-act upon the rebel himself. The Great Maker and Ruler of the universe does not act by necessity nor by caprice, but by intelligent plan. Man may change his purpose, because defective or impracticable. God is absolutely perfect. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him?"

III. Hence utter failure in the attempt. "The children of Judah prevailed" (ver. 18). Terrible slaughter, towns and cities captured. "The children of Israel were brought under at that time," utterly defeated in their purpose. "Ambushment," stratagems cannot thwart God. "Eight hundred thousand chosen men" no more

avail than one thousand. Folly to resist God and harden ourselves in sin, by disobeying his commands, by rebelling against his providential dealings, and by refusing the offers of mercy. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?" "Ye shall not prosper" (ver. 12).

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND PRACTICAL APOSTASY.

Abijah here at his best; eloquent in speech, religious in appearance, and victorious in conflict. Read account in Kings to form a true estimate. He walked in the sins of Rehoboam, and his heart "was not perfect before God." He boasted of religious observances, yet guilty of idolatry and its attendant immoralities (1 Ki. xiv. 23, 24). Learn—I. **The folly of judging men by outward forms or special occasions.** Forms may be assumed, put on like clothes for the occasion. Circumstances may call forth the best of the man. Religious for the occasion. II. **Men may hide their sins under the garb of religious practices.** Domestic evils and personal inconsistency hidden by outward worship, liberal giving, &c. The dark side covered with the bright side, truth defended and its claims resisted. III. **Men may reproach others for sins of which they are guilty themselves.** Abijah blamed Jeroboam for casting off God, when he was not right with God himself. His own character not better than that of his enemy. The Jews condemned the Gentiles for doing the same things which they virtually did themselves. Greville, in his memoirs, exhibits the very faults, critics say, which he freely condemns in kings, queens, and nobles. "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein (the matter in which) thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest (substantially) the same things" (Rom. ii. 1).

"Be not too rigidly censorious:
A string may jar in the best master's hand,
And the most skilful archer miss his aim" [Roscommon].

ABIJAH'S RELIGION.

1. *Defective in its source.* Springing from a divided heart. "His heart was not perfect" and "he walked in the sins of his father." 2. *Occasional in its appearance.* Called into vigour by special exigency, fitful in operation, a religion for special seasons. Much loud and spurious religion now; demonstrative on extraordinary occasions, at ordinary times lukewarm and languid. In times of war many awake, put on armour; in time of quietness at home and early life they are found in enemy's camp. 3. *Prominent in its display.* Great in reform, eloquent in speech, prominent in actions. Circumstances brought him to the front. But only a religion of place and occasional service. 4. *Uncertain in its duration.* David before the giant, Judas Maccabeus before the host of Epiphanes could not have been more prominent and more ready, but piety no vital, lasting hold upon him. A heart weakened and dissipated by double allegiance, became alienated; service a vicious compromise; religion a mere episode, an interlude in a life of flagrant idolatry!

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 5. *Covenant of salt.* 1. A and mutual attachment," friendship bond of intimate friendship. "To eat inviolable, incorruptible. 2. A pledge salt together an act of sure friendship of perpetuity. Salt consolidates and

preserves. The "lamp" or "torch" of David was always to burn (1 Ki. ii. 36; 2 Ki. viii. 19). Often on verge of extinction through sins within and darkness without, but house of David never perished. "It is the struggle between these contending elements to which, after the shock of the disruption, the kingdom and church of Judah was exposed, that gives the main interest to the period of the seven first successors of Solomon. Both kingdom and church were menaced with destruction at its commencement. At its close both were established on a basis sufficiently solid to withstand the dangers of the later period for two more centuries" [Stanley].

Vers. 6-12. *Abijah's remonstrance with Jeroboam.* I. We shall consider the words of our text—1. In reference to the contest then pending between Judah and Israel; 2. Abijah's address was certainly striking and judicious; 3. The event justified his expectations. II. In reference to the contest now existing between God and sinners. 1. There is a contest now pending; 2. Suffer the word of exhortation; 3. From the former view of this subject we may learn how to obtain the blessing of God upon our aims; 4. From the latter view of this subject we may learn how to escape the destruction to which we are exposed [C. Simeon, M.A.].

Vers. 13-17. *Man's extremity and God's power to help.* Judah in very great danger inveigled by ambushment. I. *God's people often brought into extremities.* 1. By their own foolish enterprises. 2. By the temptations of their enemies. 3. By the providence of God leading them to test and train them. "Their defence (*Heb.* shadow.

God a shadow from heat and tempest) departed from them (Num. xiv. 9). II. *God's people delivered by him in extremities.* Jeroboam had two in one against Abijah, but lost the day. *Sense* sees no deliverance, *reason* declares it unlikely, but *faith* assures it will come. "The Lord is with us." 1. By prayer. "They cried unto the Lord." 2. By supernatural power. "God delivered them into their hand." Israel at Red Sea against the Ethiopians (2 Chron. xiv. 11). In the day of great distress and great danger to God's people in Germany, Luther cried in his closet, and came out, declaring to friends "*Vicimus, vicimus,*" we have overcome, we have overcome. From that day Charles the Fifth issued a proclamation that none should be further molested for religion. "Thou art my deliverer: God is the Lord of Hosts, with him alone is strength and power to deliver Israel."

Vers. 20-22. *Death a common lot.* 1. It is *inevitable.* Knocks with impartial step at the door of the cottage and the palace of the prince, says Horace. It is *appointed* unto all men. Cannot be bribed by prosperity ("Abijah waxed mighty"), nor postponed by adversity ("neither did Jeroboam recover strength"). 2. It is *peculiar in method.* Abijah's a natural death, "slept with his fathers." Jeroboam "*struck.*" He never survived defeat; stung by accusing conscience, or inflicted by lingering, incurable disease (like Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi. 19) which at last killed him. Death terminates all earthly glory.

"Death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits"

[John Webster].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 5. *Salt.* The Orientals were accustomed to ratify their federal engagements by salt. This substance has, among the ancients, the emblem of friendship and fidelity, and therefore used in all their sacrifices and cove-

nants. It is a sacred pledge of hospitality which they never venture to violate. Numerous instances occur of travellers in Arabia, after being plundered and stripped by the wandering tribes of the desert, claiming the pro-

tection of some civilised Arab, who, after receiving him into his tent and giving him salt, instantly relieves his distress, and never forsakes him till he has placed him in safety. An agreement thus ratified is called in Scripture "a covenant of salt" [*Parson*].

Vers. 6-12. *Religion*. When some people talk of religion they mean they have heard so many sermons and performed so many devotions, and thus mistake the *means* for the *end*. But true religion is an habitual recollection of God, and intention to serve Him, and thus turns everything into gold [*John Newton*]. For in religion as in friendship, they who profess most are ever the least sincere [*Sheridan*]. The dispute about religion and the practice of it seldom go together [*Young*].

Vers. 13-17. *God delivered*. The craft of the Church's enemies is never but accompanied with cruelty, and

their cruelty is seldom without craft. But in things wherein they deal proudly, God is above them, and by his presence with his people he brings all their plots, counsels, and enterprises to nought. The enemies of the Jews in Nehemiah's time made great brags at first what they would do, but when they saw their plots discovered, and their purposes defeated, they are presently crestfallen, and have no mind nor courage to advance at all. To plotters may be applied what is said of Charles VIII., King of France, in his expedition against Naples: "That he came into the field like thunder and lightning, but went out like a snuff; more than a man at first, and less than a woman at last." In all ages of the world, God's signal presence with his people hath delivered them and frustrated the designs and counsels of the wicked [*Thomas Brooks*].

CHAPTER XIV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Asa succeeds, suppresses idols, and defends his kingdom (vers. 1-8; cf. 1 Kings xv. 8-12, 14, 15). Gains victory over Zerah and spoils Ethiopians.

Vers. 1-5.—*Asa destroys idol*. *Reigned*, mounted the throne very young. *Quiet*, continued effect of the great battle of Zemaraim (cf. 1 Ki. xv. 11-14). *Good* (ch. xxxi. 20). *Strange*, gods of foreign origin. Idolatry of Judah now detailed for first time. *High places* first mentioned (Num. xxiii. 3). *Images*, statues in stone of Baal. *Groves*, trunks or stocks of trees, dedicated to Ashtoroth, the Venus of Phœnicians. Ver. 5. *Images*, sun-images of Baal, different from images in ver. 3 (cf. xxxiv. 4; Lev. xxvi. 30).

Vers. 6-8.—*Asa's military defences*. *Built*, fortresses dismantled when Shishak made successful invasion. Judæa had been a dependency upon Egypt (ch. xii. 8), and dared not to erect fresh fortifications. Now Egypt weak, Asa grew bold, strengthened himself against his southern and northern neighbours. Among cities restored, probably most of those fortified by Rehoboam (ch. xi. 6-10) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 7. *Land*, i.e., unoccupied by the foe; free and open to go where we please. Ver. 8. *Targets*, Judah heavy armed; Benjamin, a warlike tribe, light armed, using sling and bow (Judg. xx. 16; 1 Ch. viii. 40). The number embraced all capable of carrying arms and liable to service.

Vers. 8-15.—*Asa defeats the Ethiopians or Cushites*. So called by Greeks, because their faces were burned or blackened by sun. *Zerah*, supposed to be Osorken (Usarken) II., third King of Egypt after Shishak, second king of twenty-second dynasty. Object of invasion to chastise Asa and bring Judah under yoke again. Ver. 9. *Mar.*, one of cities fortified by Rehoboam (ch. xi. 8), in line of march from Egypt. Ver. 10. *Went out*, lit. *before him*, sensible of inferiority but confident in God. *Nothing with thee*, "it is alike to thee to help the powerful or the weak, thou canst as easily, i.e., help the weak as the strong" [*Speak. Com.*]. There is none beside thee to help between the mighty and the

powerless, *i.e.*, no other than thou can help in an unequal conflict; meaning, of course, give help to the weaker side [*Keil*]. Ver. 12. *Smote*, gave strength to smite. Ver. 13. *Destroyed*, broken before his camp. Enemy unable to rally, pursued to Gerar, south, twenty miles at least from scene of battle. *Cities* of Philistines spoiled, because they likely accompanied Zerah in his expedition. Ver. 15. *Tents*, nomadic tribes in neighbourhood of Gerar conquered, and camels and sheep taken as prey. Besor flows through this region, hence fertility and food for man and beast. All terrified at Asa's victory and unable to resist.

HOMILETICS.

ASA THE REFORMER.—Verses 1-5.

Asa as a constitutional monarch acted like David, endeavoured to abolish the traces and polluting customs of idolatry. Pursued his purpose with earnestness and impartiality. **I. The reforms which he introduced.** Regarding God himself, he took advantage of his authority and tranquillity, tried to undo the evil left by his father (1 Ki. xv. 3), and by his grandfather (1 Ki. xiv. 22). 1. *He destroyed idolatry.* Altars and high places pulled down; broke images of Baal; destroyed public objects and relics of idolatry in Jerusalem and other cities. "When God lets loose upon the world a *thinker*, let men beware," says one. When God raises up a true *Reformer*, he will secure attention and accomplish a great work. 2. *He revived religious worship.* Useless to put down evil without setting up good. Outward reformation defective. A revived religion. (1.) *By personal example.* He "did that which was good and right, &c." (2.) *By the use of his authority.* "He commanded Judah, &c." (ver. 4). Religion requires no human edicts and decrees to support it. But those in authority may recommend it. **II. The spirit in which he carried out the reforms.** 1. *A spirit of self-consecration.* Self first. He did not engage in work to which he had not devoted himself. Many work for God who are not consecrated unto God. Reform self before you reform others. 2. *A spirit of zeal.* He began early, executed boldly and spared no dignity. The "king's mother" deposed from her position, her idol destroyed, and its ashes thrown into the brook Kidron (1 Ki. xv. 13). "See, I have set thee over (appointed thee to the oversight of) the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, &c." (Jer. i. 10). **III. The rule by which he was guided in the reforms.** "Asa did good and right in the eyes of the Lord." Not what was expedient, pleasing to himself, or to his courtiers. He sought to please God. God discerns conduct; dishonoured by the zeal of some; susceptibility to be influenced by him should be cultivated. Act ever under "the Great Taskmaster's eye." "Thou God seest me." Thus Asa the reformer an example to us in purpose, spirit, and conduct—in pulling down Popery, Ritualism, and idolatry, in setting forth true religion by personal life and public teaching.

ASA THE PRUDENT.—Verses 6-8.

In time of peace he strengthened his kingdom with fortifications and armies. **I. Prudent in tracing peace to the right source.** "The Lord had given him rest." Not gained by his valour and success over Abijah. No foes at hand, progress undisputed because God protected. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble" in the land? When God bestows comfort and peace in the home and in the heart, who can take away? But when he hideth the face (condemns), who then can behold him (enjoy his power or remove the sentence of death)? Whether it be done against (towards) a nation, or against a man only? (Job xxxiv. 29). **II. Prudent in making the best use of peace.** Like a wise king he observed "the land before him" free and needing

improvements. 1. *Mindful of danger, he prepared for defensive war.* "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace," said Washington. 2. *Conscious of weakness, he raised an army.* Not perhaps a standing army, but militia, trained-bands of the country. Judah mustered a share. Benjamin, formerly *little Benjamin* (Ps. lxxviii. 27), had greatly increased. The little one by God's blessing had become a thousand. These tribes, armed offensively and defensively, were ready for action. 3. *Depending upon his people, he enlisted their efforts.* "Therefore he said, Let us build" (ver. 7). Many rulers raise an army, levy taxes, and govern without consent of the people. This arbitrary conduct will create tumult and endanger the throne (Chas. I.). Self-willed monarchs have destroyed kingdoms and ruined themselves. "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; and in multitude of councillors there is safety."

"But war's a game which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at" [Cowper].

ASA THE CONQUEROR.—Verses 9-15.

"Zerah the Ethiopian mistook quietness for languor, and made the vulgar mistake of supposing that silence was indifference. He did not know that repose is the very highest expression of power" [Dr. Parker]. An expedition prepared, a million soldiers gathered to subjugate Asa and bring Judæa under Egyptian yoke. Asa shrank not from war, met and conquered the foe. **I. The source to which he looked for help.** "Asa cried unto the Lord his God." 1. *To God's strength.* He knew God in peace and looked to him in war—believed in God's power to help with few or many, to weak or strong. Man, *mortal* man, could not prevail against him. God omnipotent, works how he likes, and depends not upon numbers. "For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." 2. *To God's strength gained by prayer.* Help ever ready, only available by seeking. Prayer before battle short, earnest, and intense. Notice ground of confidence, "Thou art our God," well tried and ever sufficient; active reliance, "We rest on thee." Thus can we only overcome in temptations and spiritual conflicts. **II. The spirit in which he entered the fight.** Not cowardly and fearful. God gives not the spirit of fear, but of courage. "Be thou strong and courageous." The war not aggressive, but sacred; for God's glory, not his own, "In thy name." "Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord my banner," the standard or ensign around which we must rally to indicate our party, define our cause, and march to victory. He is the captain of our salvation, fights our battles, and wins our victories. He bids us to fight, not his will that we should be timorous and weak, "In the name of our God we will set up our banner." **III. The victory by which it was distinguished.** "The Lord smote the Egyptians before Asa." The foe driven like straw before the wind; pursued and overcome. Cities smitten, cattle taken, and booty enormous. "The defeat of Zerah is one of the most remarkable events in the history of the Jews. On no other occasion did they meet in the field or overcome the forces of either of the two great monarchies between which they were placed. Under Asa they appear to have gained a complete and most glorious victory, over the entire force of Egypt, or of Ethiopia wielding the power of Egypt" [*Speak. Com.*].

WARFARE AND PRAYER.—Verses 9-12.

Notice in the prayer—**I. A devout acknowledgment of the Divine government.** From God alone he received the kingdom, and by him alone could he defend it. He was supreme, and could help against "a great

multitude." "He breaketh down" kingdoms and cities—Sodom, Babylon, Petra, and Pompeii—and "they cannot be built again;" He builds up and none can "pull down"—God's agency is traced over man and nations, in nature and religion. **II. The obedient method in which he conducted the war.** The spirit of dependence upon God; the spirit of hope and prayer. The spirit of Moses, Samuel, and David. In prayer he may expect courage and help, such reinforcements "the gift of the knees."

"Hast thou not learned what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?" [*Cowper*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. *Right.* 1. Right is good (acceptable) to God, when the heart is put into it. 2. Right is good to man, helpful to temporal and spiritual interests. But right implies *rule*, law of rectitude. The *rule* followed, constantly obeyed, to be acceptable. God's law must be path of duty and this path pursued firmly, without pause or retrograde step.

Ver. 6. *Given him rest.* 1. God the sovereign dispenser of quietness or comfort to *individuals*. Gives peace to awakened sinners in Christ. Peace and rest the fruit of faith in him. 2. God the sovereign dispenser of quietness and comfort to *nations and churches*. To nations (1 Chr. xxii. 9-18). To churches (Acts ix. 31). He makes peace in our borders (Ps. xiv. 7-14); causes wars to cease to the ends of the earth (Ps. xlvi. 9). Ver. 7. *Rest.* It did his heart good to think how piously they had purchased their present peace; and therefore he repeateth it (Zech. viii. 19) [*Trapp*].

Vers. 9-11. *The Holy War.* Un-

dertaken for a sacred purpose—with confidence of divine help, to maintain the honour and service of God. The parties most unequally matched. The Lord Jehovah and mortal, feeble man. How can man prevail against his Maker! The folly of opposing God. *The war-cry* most stimulating. Assurance in God's name gives comfort in trouble, triumph in conflict. It is strength impregnable and sufficient for greatest dangers. Only under this one ensign, lifted above all other banners of the sacramental host, bearing this one name, can we ascribe the words: *In hoc vinces*.

Ver. 13. *Before his host.* *Before his camp*; the army of Asa, the camp of Jehovah, who resided in it, defended it, and led it to victory. "Earlier expositors fancied that the reference was to a heavenly, a host of angels, according to Gen. xxxii. 2 *seq.*" [*Keil*].

Ver. 14. *Fear of the Lord.* Its effect upon men now renders them fearful and helpless, what hereafter! Who can stand before him? Resist not, but humbly submit and be saved.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 2-5. High places. No sooner is a temple built for God, but the Devil builds a chapel hard by [*Geo. Herbert*]. Man is a born idol-worshipper, *sight-worshipper*, so sensuous, imaginative is he; and also partakes much of the nature of an ape [*Carlyle*].

"'Tis to make idols, and to find them clay"
[*Mrs. Hemans*].

Vers. 6-8. *Built.* Prudence is an ability of judging what is best in the choice both of the end and of the means [*Groves*]. No evil can surprise us if we watch, no evil can hurt us if we pray [*Bp. Hall*].

Ver. 9. This is the largest collected army of which we hear in Scripture; but it does not exceed the known numbers of Oriental armies in ancient times.

Darius Codomannus brought into the field at Arbela a force one million and forty thousand. Xerxes crossed into Greece with certainly above a million of combatants. Artaxerxes Mnemon collected one million two hundred and sixty thousand men, to meet the attack of the younger Cyrus [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 12-15. *Fled.* The results which follow are most striking. The southern power cannot rally from the blow, but rapidly declines, and for above three centuries makes no further

effort in this direction. Assyria grows in strength, continually pushes her arms further, and finally under Sargon and Sennacherib, penetrates to Egypt itself. All fear of Egypt as an aggressive power ceases; and the Israelites learn instead to lean upon the Pharaohs for support (2 Ki. xvii. 4; xviii. 21; Is. xxx. 2-4). Friendly ties alone connect the two countries; and it is not till B.C. 609 that an Egyptian force again enters Palestine with a hostile intention [*Ibid.*].

CHAPTER XV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] A prophetic warning (vers. 1-7). Asa's reforms (vers. 8-11); renewal of covenant (vers. 12-19), and deposes Maachah.

Vers. 1-7.—*Azariah warns Asa.* Spirit upon A. (cf. Num. xxiv. 2). *Oded*, by some Iddo, prophet and historian of two preceding reigns. Names differ very slightly in Heb. *Seek him* (cf. 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Jer. xxix. 13), as they had done in battle (vers. 3-6). A future condition predicted according to some. "Israel here is used generally for the whole people of God; and the reference is especially to the many apostasies in the days of the Judges (Jud. iii. 7-12; vi. 1; viii. 33; x. 6), which were followed by repentance and deliverance" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Priest*, succession unbroken, but occasions when none taught true religion. Ver. 5. *Peace*, free communications interrupted; commotions, great vexations (Amos iii. 9; Deut. xxviii. 20). Ver. 6. *Destroyed*, different provinces crushed one another by contentions among themselves. Ver. 7. *Strong, i.e., be firm*, continue faithful to Jehovah. *Reward* will follow, as in conquest of Zerah.

Vers. 8-11.—*Asa's religious reforms.* Earlier reforms only partial success. Animated by Azariah, he became more zealous, extirpated abominations in his own kingdom, in cities which his father had taken from Jeroboam, and renewed altar of burnt offering before porch. Ver. 9. *Gathered.* Pious Israelites drawn into the territory of Judah by reformed worship, for solemn renewal of national covenant. Ver. 10. *Third month*, Sivan, corresponding with June. Ver. 11. *Same time*, Heb. in that day; the day on which the festival was celebrated, sixth of third month, the Feast of Weeks. *Offered* peace-offerings, in communion with Jehovah and with one another (Lev. vii. 11-21). *Spoil*, brought by them as thank-offerings (cf. ch. xiv. 13).

Vers. 12-19.—*Renewal of national covenant.* *Seek* the Lord and to execute with vigour laws which make idolatry punishable with death (Ex. xxii. 20; Deut. xvii. 2-5; Heb. x. 28). Ver. 15. *Oath* taken in solemn and joyful emotion. God was found, because sincerely sought, and gave them rest (ver. 15). Ver. 16. *Maachah* (cf. 1 Ki. xv. 13) "held honoured place of queen-mother, like Sultana Walide of East," withdrawn from rank and her idol destroyed. Ver. 17. *High places*, hills on which sacrifices were offered, were not entirely destroyed by people, though intended by the King. Ver. 18. *Things*, for ornament and repairs. Ver. 19. *War.* As B. died in the 26th year of Asa (1 Ki. xvi. 8), it appears, from ver. 10 and from ch. xvi. 1-9, that the date here ought to be, not the 35th, but the 25th year of Asa. This allows a period of repose after the reform of Asa [*Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

RECIPROCAL FELLOWSHIP.—Verse 2.

The prophet met Asa in returning from victorious pursuit. Signal success a proof of God's presence; victory the reward of implicit trust in him. Keep close to God and he will bless you; forsake him and you reap the fruits of apostasy. As you deal with him he will deal with you. **I. A distinguished privilege.** God's presence with them. In the ordinances of his house, in special providence, and covenant engagements. God owns them as his people, protects them from enemies, and prospers them in all things. This a glory and happiness beyond description. Not in good things common to them with the world, but the distinguished privilege of God's people, to possess his favour and enjoy his presence. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." **II. The conditions on which this privilege is enjoyed.** "While ye be with Him." Nothing bestowed arbitrarily nor kept without care. The duration and degree of happiness on certain conditions. 1. *Reasonable conditions.* If we do not seek, nor care for God, is it likely that he will be with us? "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" 2. *Scriptural conditions.* A doctrine of Scripture that God's continual favour depends upon obedience and perseverance, "continuance in well-doing." "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." 3. *Wise conditions.* To put us on guard and caution against danger. To comfort in sorrow and encourage in effort. Seek and ye shall find. Serve and you shall succeed. Forsake God and present triumphs, present enjoyments are not secure.

DARK SHADOWS ON A BRIGHT DAY.—Verses 1-7.

Azariah did not congratulate Asa on splendid victory, nor indulge in flattery to court princely favour. The speech appears unsuitable for the occasion. Whether it unfolds future apostasy or describes past history, it is a prophetic warning, a gloomy picture on a bright day. It proves necessary connection between God's service and human weal, and dwells on apostasy with its fearful consequences. **I. The awful apostasy.** Turning away. 1. *Practical atheism.* "Without the true God." A God of truth (Jer. x. 10), "the God of Amen" (Is. lxxv. 16). Idols not true, nonentities. "An idol is nothing in the world." Hence true here not only opposed to error and idolatry, but to emptiness, deceit, and God's character. Everything else a lie, and idolatry the greatest lie. Practically to be without God, to be in darkness, error, and uncertainty. 2. *Deprived of priestly function.* No instruction and guidance for ministers, or no reverence and regard for their office. Sad when the light of ministry is darkened. "Without a teaching priest" descriptive of spiritual destitution. For duty of a priest is to "keep" (store up and distribute) "knowledge, and they (people) shall seek the law (God's will) at his mouth, &c." (Mal. ii. 7, 8). 3. *Prevalence of moral disorder.* "Without law." Where no direction is, no law can govern. God's law forgotten, and every one a law to himself. Right neither taught nor practised. Rectitude perverted, and whatever straight made crooked. Natural conscience and God's command defied, and as in age of Nero nothing unlawful. **II. The terrible judgments which followed apostasy.** Consequences of forsaking God set forth in expressive terms. 1. *Widespread anarchy.* "No peace to him that went out" (ver. 5). No free intercourse nor safe abode in any village. "The highways were unoccupied," i.e., rested from noise of chariots, and the feet of the travellers walked (for safety) through by-ways

(winding, unfrequented ways) (Judg. v. 6). In times of public panic resort to subterranean hiding-places (ch. vi. 2). 2. *Civil dissensions.* Vexations in various regions of the land. "Nation was *destroyed* of nation," beaten in pieces by oppression and war. Gilead against Ephraim, and Benjamin against other tribes, until almost exterminated (*cf.* Judg. xii. 4; xx. 33-48; illus. by Wars of the Roses, the Commonwealth, and American Civil War). 3. *General calamity.* "For God did vex them with all adversity, confounded them with all kinds of oppressions," social and national. Depth of corruption brought severity of chastisement. Idolatry and evil-doing most provoking; judgment most crushing and bitter, retribution like a consuming fire. "Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened (with smoke, ver. 18), and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire" (Is. ix. 19).

"Take heed: for God holds vengeance in His hand
To hurl upon their heads that break His law" [*Shakes.*].

III. The way of escape from these judgments. "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him, &c." 1. *This a fact in Divine procedure.* Proved in days of Judges, division of the two kingdoms, recent victory, and in all periods of national history. "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath forsaken you." 2. *This a warning for the future.* Victory over Zerah should teach something. God's blessing upon all who steadfastly adhere to him, but abandon him and he will abandon you. Hence be quickened in your work (ver. 7). Resolve with energy to carry it on amid opposition. The most blessed results to yourself and others will follow. "If thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever."

ASA'S CONTINUED REFORMS.—Verses 8-19.

The warning had influence. Asa obeyed, took courage, and entered upon measures judicious, decisive, and extensive. **I. The character of the reforms upon which he entered.** Destructive of evil and establishment of good. 1. *He sought to extirpate idolatry.* "Put way the abominable idols. (*a*) *Idolatry most prevalent.* In his own territory, "the land of Judah and Benjamin;" in cities taken by his father (ver. 8). (*b*) *Idolatry most abominable.* Idol of king's mother horrible, of some monstrous kind; so obscene that it was publicly burned under the walls of Jerusalem (verse 16). We should purify our hearts and land; destroy gods material, literary and moral, worshipped in our days. 2. *He engaged in needful repairs.* "Renewed the altar, &c." (verse 8). Reconstructed a temporary altar like that of Solomon (vii. 7), for extraordinary sacrifices on special occasions; or renewed, embellished the one desecrated in reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah. All reforms began here. Prophets and reformers of O.T. especially concerned for the altar and restoration of Divine worship. Decayed altars signify neglected sacrifices, perverted religion, and practical apostasy. In revivals, offerings, and thanksgiving restored. 3. *He pledged the nation to solemn covenant.* "They entered into a covenant." Humble for sin, they renewed their obligations; joined together in pledges to keep the law and punish disobedience. (*a*) *To seek the Lord.* Seek the laws, favour, and help of their father's God, whom they had forsaken. Seek with heart and soul, with diligence and energy. Naturally without God, he must seek in faith, penitence, and under guidance of Holy Spirit. (*b*) *To punish idolators.* Punishment severe, "put to death;" impartial, "small or great, man or woman;" universal, "whosoever, &c." Must not go too far in penalty and severity. Christianity advances by charity, not by persecution. "We do not find this engagement expressly made in other renewals of the covenant. It would, how-

ever, be implied in them, since it was one of the commandments (see Ex. xxii. 20; Deut. xiii. 9-15; xvii. 2-7) [*Speak. Com.*]. **II. The spirit in which he carried out these reforms.** 1. *A spirit of vigour.* No trifling with the occasion. His foundation broad, and the policy built upon it gracious, energetic, and complete. 2. *A spirit of impartiality.* Gods of high places and gods of groves; images from the city and of the palace. He would not allow even his mother to keep an idol. Many are great reformers in national, not in private matters. Earnest before the public, too lenient at home. Asa knew nothing about father or mother, partiality or concession. The royal grove cut down, the favourite god stamped upon, consumed in the flame, and its ashes thrown into the brook. 3. *A spirit of gratitude.* He presented votive offerings in the temple. "The things that his father had dedicated," spoils from Abijam's victory over Jeroboam; spoils of his own from Zerah, the Ethiopian, were presented as thank-offerings to him by whose power they had been gained, and to whom all silver and gold belong. Things dedicated to holy use should not be desecrated nor withheld. Our vows should be performed and our first-fruits offered to God. Gratitude helped by the vow of it. "Vow and pay to the Lord your God; let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared."

"THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT."—Verses 10-15.

"Entered into the covenant." It is evident that a covenant existed before this; they renew it with gladness and enthusiasm. "Solemn renewals of original covenant made in the wilderness (Ex. xxiv. 3-8) occur from time to time in Jewish history after intervals of apostasy. This renewal in reign of Asa is the first on record. The next falls 300 years later, in reign of Josiah (2 Ki. xxiii. 3). There is a third in the time of Jeremiah (Neb. x. 28, 29). On such occasions the people bound themselves by solemn oath to observe all directions of the law, and call down God's curse upon them if they forsook it" [*Speak. Com.*]. **I. The assembly by which it was ratified.** Representatives from Judah and Benjamin, strangers from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon. The king's own subjects and those who had transferred allegiance to him from Israel. Outsiders invited, welcomed, and encouraged to acquaint themselves with God and walk in his commands. **II. The solemnities by which it was accompanied.** Besides rededications of themselves and stern but wholesome league against idolatry—1. *Innumerable sacrifices.* "They offered unto the Lord seven hundred oxen and seven hundred sheep." 2. *Exultant joy.* "With shouting, with trumpets, and with cornets." People testified unbounded satisfaction with loud voice and instruments. The revival of religion, the manifestation of God's presence, a source of pure and permanent joy. "When his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. *Inspiration and duty.* 1. An inspired man is qualified to give a message. Suitable, intelligent, and timely. 2. An inspired man will give his message fearlessly and successfully. 3. Inspired men, men taught of God, not time-servers, required now.

Ver. 2. *If ye seek him.* 1. A fact in national history; 2. A truth in Christian

experience; 3. A correction in general tendencies. Neither to presume nor to despair.

Ver. 3. *A picture of utter destitution in spiritual life.* "Without the true God." Then Israel had false gods? Yes, innumerable gods even Israel acquired, notwithstanding the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other

gods before me." "It is not a commandment that can keep a man at home. No bill of stipulations can convert your children and make them filial. We may have a time-bill for the action of the whole day, but the world was never yet saved by commandments. Israel trampled ten of them under foot, and we have trampled ten thousand. We can do despite unto the spirit of grace; we can insult God. 'Without a teaching priest,'—not an ornament, nor a ceremonialist, but a teaching priest. A man whose business it was to expound the law and make the people understand it. So they preached in olden time; they took the law syllable by syllable, explained it word by word, and sentence by sentence; they analysed it, took it member from member. They put it together again and hurled it upon the people like a thunderbolt from heaven. They had naught else to expound, because they thought nothing else worthy of exposition. We are lost in details. Any man may get up a lecture, if he has great quoting power. It is almost impossible not to get up a lecture; the temptations are innumerable, and in many cases irresistible. Only one speech is worth listening to, that is the speech which begins in eternity, sweeps down through time, leaves behind it immortal lessons, and ascends to the fountain of origin. Demand the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. Be in earnest. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, &c.'" [Dr. Parker].

Vers. 8-10. *The influence of a great example.* When Asa entered earnestly upon reform—I. *He drew others to his side.* The halting decide, the half-hearted kindle, before a zealous man. "They fell to him out of Israel in abundance." Armies often perish, churches decay for want of leaders. II. *He succeeded in his efforts.* Success not given to hesitancy and idleness. Asa positive, determined, rallied others round him and accomplished great things. III. *He gained freedom from attachment.* "And the Lord gave them rest round about." A bold, defiant attitude frightens the foe. Numbers and God's help will overcome them and ensure peace.

"Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful."

Ver. 15. *Heart service.* 1. God will not accept a *divided* heart. This useless. The whole or none. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." 2. God requires the *whole* heart. "With *all* their heart." 3. This requirement eminently *reasonable* and *fit*. 4. The heart must be *willingly given*. Devotion only true when free. When King William (Rufus) tried to force Anselm to a certain course, he replied, "Treat me as a free man, and I devote myself and all I have to your service. Treat me as a slave, and you shall have neither me nor mine." "The servant (bondslave) of Jesus Christ" (Rom. i. 1). 5. When thus sought and served he will be found. "Search me, O God, and prove me."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1-7. *God's presence.* Walking together is a very common action of human fellowship; much interchange of thought and opinion takes place in the long daily walks of two friends, but this implies a certain evenness and similarity of gait: for "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" In common parlance this is spoken of as "keeping step;" and that this very

thing is required of us, we see in a very striking and reiterated warning in Lev. xxvi. 12, 21-28, where God promises to "walk among His people," ready, as it were, for this steady, even step. "But if ye walk contrary unto me," or as in margin, "If ye walk at all adventures with me;" or by another reading, "If ye walk at haphazard with me," in a jerking, spasmodic, con-

trary fashion, such as, alas! we know too well, *then* "will I also walk contrary unto you" [*Mrs. Gordon*].

"My business now is with my God to walk,
And guided by His holy eye to go;
Sweet fellowship with Him to cultivate,
And His unclouded countenance to know"
[*J. F. Elwin*].

Ver. 12. *Covenant*. Charles Kingsley wrote, on entering his 22nd year: "My birth-night. I have been for the last hour on the seashore; not dreaming, but thinking deeply and strongly, and forming determinations which are to affect my destiny through time and eternity. Before the sleeping earth,

and the sleepless sea and stars, I have devoted myself to God—a vow never (if He gives me the faith I pray for) to be recalled."

Ver. 15. *The Lord gave rest*. In 1815, when the British Parliament were voting honours and emoluments to Wellington, and considering "the measures necessary towards forming a peace establishment," suddenly all their plans were interrupted and their peace prospects dissipated by the intelligence that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. Nothing like this will occur during the rest which God gives. His enemies once subdued will be subdued for ever.

CHAPTER XVI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Asa prevents Baasha from invading Judah (vers. 1-6); Asa reproved by Hanani (vers. 7-10); Asa's sickness and end (vers. 11-14; cf. parallel in 1 Ki. xv. 16-24).

Vers. 1-6.—*Baasha invades Judah. Six and thirtieth*. Baasha died before this date (1 Ki. xv. 33). Critics consider the date calculated from the separation of the kingdoms, and coincident with 16th year of Asa's reign. A mode of reckoning generally followed in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel, the public annals of the time (ver. 11), the source from which the inspired historian drew his account (cf. *Jamieson and Keil*). *Built, i.e., fortified. Go out*, to prevent all communication between the countries. "The fortification of Ramah by Baasha presupposes his recovery of the cities, which had been taken by Abijah from the northern kingdom, and which, according to ch. xv. 8, were still in Asa's possession" [*Keil*]. *Benhadad*, Benhidri in Assyrian monuments; Ader in Sept., to whom smaller provinces round Damascus (*Heb. Darnesek*) were subject. Ver. 3. *There is*, let there be a league, &c. Ver. 4. *Ijon*, city of Naphtali (1 Ki. xv. 20). *Dan* colonised (Judg. xviii.; Jos. xix. 47). *Abel-maim*, "meadow of waters," supposed to be situated on marshy plain near uppermost lake of Jordan. *Store* or "all Cinneroth and all the land of Naphtali" in 1 Ki. xv. 20. Both statements true and supplementary. Ver. 5. *Cease*. Baasha might intend to reside in Ramah. Unexpected hostilities from his son and ally prevented further progress, and Baasha's death soon after interrupted work of fortifying. Ver. 6. No actual engagement mentioned. *Geba* (Jos. xviii. 24). *Mizpah* (Gen. xxxi. 45-55).

Vers. 7-10. *Asa reproved by prophet Hanani*. Hanani, father of Jehu the prophet (xix. 2). *Relied* not on God, from whom prosperity and former victory, but on man. *Escaped*. That is, if he had trusted in God he would not only have defeated the army of Baasha, but that of Benhadad. His conduct in parting with temple treasures and bribing an ally of the King of Israel most foolish and lost him a splendid victory. Ver. 8. The huge host of the Ethiopians overcome by God's help. Assyria would have been, had Asa trusted in God. Ver. 9. *For*, a striking description of divine providence over the man whose heart is perfect with God. Ver. 10. This address vexed Asa, and spread discontent among his people, whom he *oppressed*, tried to crush in some form or other. He maltreated the prophet. *Prison*, house of stocks, a sort of torture for crime—*Heb.*, house of distortion, because limbs were so set and fixed as to be twisted and distorted in it.

Vers. 11-14.—*Asa's sickness and end*. Book of Kings, a public record of civil events. *Diseased*, a kind of gout, but uncertain, began two years before death (ver. 13), became greatly "moved upwards" in body and proved violent in nature. *Yet*, as in war, so in sickness, he put undue confidence in man. *Physicians*, Egyptians in high repute at foreign

courts, who pretended to expel disease by charms and mystic rites. *Buried him in a rock tomb; made, digged by himself, in his lifetime, as often done by Oriental kings, with special funeral magnificence; odours to neutralise offensive smells of corpse exposed on "the bed" to public view, or to embalm with aromatic spices in great profusion. Great burning.* According to some, consuming spices customary at funerals of kings; according to others, for cremation of the body, "a usage which was at that time, and long after, prevalent among the Hebrews, and the omission of which in the case of royal personages was reckoned a great indignity (ch. xxi. 19; 1 Sam. xxxi. 12; Jer. xxxiv. 5; Amos vi. 10)" [*Jam.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE FOLLY OF BRIBERY.—Verses 1-10.

Asa hired the help of a heathen neighbour, the powerful King of Syria, to defend himself against the attack of Baasha. This considered prudent, a good stroke of policy, but trust in man, not in God, and met with condemnation from Hanani the seer. **I. It led to sacrilege in religious things.** Treasures of the temple were diverted from sacred to worldly use. The sanctuary and the palace robbed to bribe an earthly king to help! Religious ordinances desecrated, justice sold, and men bribed often by "silver and gold"; gifts bestowed or promised with a view to prevent judgment or corrupt morals abominable. Bribery a canker in constitutional governments, a disgrace in all departments of life. He who presents a bribe perpetuates moral evil, sacrifices both truth and right to selfish interests. Absalom bribed the people to become the king. Judas bribed by high priests to effect the death of Christ.

"Judges and senates have been bought for gold:
Esteem and love were never to be sold" [*Page*].

II. It brought down Divine reproof. God not bribed, comes on the scene in the person of the prophet, "At that time Hanani the seer came" (ver. 7). Wrong must be condemned, right declared, and severe reproof administered to evil-doers. 1. *Asa acted unworthy of God's representative.* Kings, priests, and judges God's vicegerents, must be free from corruption and bribery. "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift." 2. *Asa sought not God's help.* "Because thou hast relied on the King of Syria and not relied on the Lord thy God." When God is forsaken he will assert his supremacy and claims in conscience, in providence, in affliction. Wicked men not allowed to indulge in excuses and selfish pleas; nor to plead the power of circumstances, the force of reason, and the probability of success. Never put money before duty, man before God! **II. It defeated its own ends.** "Herein thou hast done foolishly." Man's foresight not always wise. 1. *Asa missed the opportunity of a double victory.* "Therefore is the host of the King of Syria escaped out of thine hand." A victory over the combined forces of Baasha and Benhadad more splendid than that over the Ethiopians lost by his conduct. Possible by unnecessary and improper alliances to hinder our good and prevent God from granting deliverance. 2. *Asa exposed himself to greater danger.* "Therefore from henceforth thou shalt have war" (ver. 9). The cupidity of the one increased the hostility of the other (1 Kings xv. 32). Those who bribe and those bribed not to be depended upon. Money will dissolve the most solemn league. For gold men will sell their votes, their conscience, and themselves. Cato complained that M. Cælius the Tribune "might be hired for a piece of bread to speak or to hold his peace." Never rule conduct by the fear of man instead of trust in God. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe (may set on high above danger, &c.)" (Prov. xxix. 25).

THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY.—Verses 2-4.

There seems much to excuse Asa's conduct. In his days it was often thought right to buy oneself out of danger. But the bribery of Benhadad condemned and cannot be justified. Learn the influence of money. **I. There is a lawful use of money.** Used for educational and philanthropic purposes, to encourage industry, arts, and sciences, to relieve distress and advance the cause of God, it is better than fleets and armies. Rightly used, "money answereth all things." **II. There is an unlawful use of money.** Used for selfish ends, to frustrate right and bribe men to wrong. It may buy men in limbs, intellect, and conscience; make peace and create war. It is one of the mightiest rulers, one of the most popular gods in the world! "A man furnished with the arguments from the mint will convince his antagonist much sooner than one who draws them from reason and philosophy. Gold is a wonderful clearer of the understanding, it dissipates every doubt and scruple in an instant; accommodates itself to the meanest capacities; silences the loud and clamorous, and brings over the most obstinate and inflexible" [Addison]. **III. The unlawful use of money becomes a curse.** Put against duty, virtue, and God, its power is pernicious. It breaks up alliances, prepares for temptations, corrupts human nature, and influences to injustice. "Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa" and was a striking contrast to Hanani. True religion only begets love for truth, upholds commercial honesty, social order, and just government. God rewards the man who resists bribes and acts uprightly. "He that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure."

ASA'S VAIN HELP.—Verses 2-4 and 12.†

Years of prosperity did not make Asa a better man. "In all time of our wealth, &c." He forgot need of help, and in times of danger resorted to worldly policy and trusted not to God. **I. In time of war he relied upon human help.** In northern kingdom, Baasha exterminated posterity of Jeroboam, ruled upon the throne, and menaced Jerusalem. Ramah, on the dividing lines of the two kingdoms, built and held in defence. Baasha strengthened himself in his bold designs by league with King of Syria, but was bought off, bribed to help Asa. This political wisdom, but spiritual folly; prospered for a time, but costly in its triumph. It might be prevalent custom, but not the path of duty. Is our code of honour any purer? Do we seek to get out of difficulties by questionable means? Give money for leagues, covenants, and deliverance? Such reliance is vain help, entails mischiefs in social and spiritual matters which outweigh all apparent gains. Better confide in God than in our own schemes. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." **II. In time of sickness he relied upon foreign physicians.** No harm in physicians, but physicians without scientific training, physicians with only charms and mystic arts, are "physicians of no value." (Heathen doctors and witchcraft.) **1. This foolish conduct.** "Sought not to the Lord," after his former experience of God's faithfulness and truth, after his stern reproof by the prophet. What avails physicians of greatest skill and kindness without God? Entire confidence in creature, misplaced and dishonours God. **2. This useless conduct.** Physicians could not cure; the disease spread, and recovery impossible. Physicians, ministers, and friends but men, not to be despised, only used as *servants* of God,

and not as sum-totals. In all extremities, sickness, and death, call upon the Lord for help. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help (salvation)" (Ps. cxlvi. 3). "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

THE MINISTRY OF TRUTH.—Verses 7-10.

I. Exercised by a Divine messenger. "Hanani the seer came to Asa, King of Judah"—specially qualified and commissioned by God. "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling-place." **II. Revealing the true source of help.** Asa overcame Ethiopians with very many chariots and horsemen. "Because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand." Men could not be reproved for doing wrong if they knew no right—for not trusting God, if God was not revealed to them. **III. Treated with injustice.** "Asa was wroth with the seer and put him in a prison, &c." Rejection of Divine reproof sadly common and self-ruinous. Message despised and messenger persecuted. "He that refuseth instruction (correction) despiseth his own soul." **IV. Justified by its results.** Truth may be kept down, but never crushed; prophets imprisoned or put to death, but right prevails. Divine reproofs attested by conscience, vindicated by providence. Revenge is impotent. God's purpose cannot be frustrated.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE WORLD.—Verse 9.

God would have helped Asa if he had called upon him; for he is everywhere present in time of need—specially ready to help those who trust Him. **I. Providence benevolent in its design.** "To show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." He not only sees danger, but delivers from it, keeps and defends his people. If King Philip could sleep safely because his friend Antipater watched over him, how much more kind and efficient the providence of God! **II. Providence personal in its exercise.** "We learn from observation of others. God inspects and rules of himself—not by abstract laws and principles merely, not by secondary causes, not by the eyes and agencies of inferior creatures. "He *shows himself* strong" in purpose and proceedings. **III. Providence minute in its inspection.** "To and fro," publicly and privately, in thought and act. His vigilance ever active and never worn out. Nothing escapes his notice nor eludes his grasp. "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." **IV. Providence universal in its extent.** "Through the whole earth." Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busied at Alexander's birth. "I cannot be everywhere present," cried Napoleon when he lost one battle in trying to gain another. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place"—on sea and land, in society and solitude. We cannot go from his spirit nor flee from his presence. In heaven above and hell beneath (Psa. cxxxix.).

"What can 'scape the eye
Of God, all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient?" [*Milton*].

V. Providence swift in its operation. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro." Implying celerity, swiftness in giving relief. Delay only when needful and good for us. In promise and fulfilment, "his word runneth very swiftly." Lessons—Encouragement for the believer, a warning to the wicked, a reason for circumspection to all.

THE EYES OF THE LORD.—Verse 9.

I. The description of providence. “Eyes of the Lord” in Scripture signify—1. His knowledge. 2. His providence. (1) The immediateness of providence—His own eyes. (2) Its celerity and speed. (3) Its extent. (4) Its diligence. (5). Its efficacy. **II. The design of providence.** “To show himself strong, &c.” 1. He has strong understanding, and wisdom to contrive. 2. Strong affection to love. 3. Strong words to cheer and fortify. 4. A strong arm to exert almighty power. The persons for whom those who are truly gracious and sincere [*J. Ryland, sen., 1750*].

ASA'S PERTINACITY IN WRONG-DOING.

I. When reproved for sin he did not confess it. In consequence he committed one evil after another. David reproved by Nathan was conscience-stricken, melted to penitence and confessed, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Not so Asa. **II. He added greater guilt by trying to hide his sin.** He denied it, got into a rage with the seer, and persecuted him. Reproved, probably in the presence of courtiers; he was haughty, took advantage of his circumstances, and adopted severe measures in apparent refutation of his sin. “To hide a sin with a lie is like a crust of leprosy over an ulcer,” says Jeremy Taylor. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” **III. When he would neither confess nor forsake his sin God sent affliction, which did not at first humble him.** Man could not lodge Asa from his hiding-place, but God's resources are never exhausted. What the final issue was appears uncertain. From Scripture references the last expedient might humble the king and bring him to God. But at beginning of sickness not in right state of mind, and applied to wrong source for help. “This is a striking example of pertinacity in sin, which carries with it a solemn warning. Who would have expected this of the once pious Asa! What an urgent enforcement does this example furnish of the exhortation of the apostle: ‘Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, &c.’ That, indeed, must be a most treacherous and deceitful thing which could lead a rational and religious being so far away from the truth and piety as thus to persist in his iniquity, and attempt to justify himself before God—yea, more than that, virtually to engage in an unequal warfare with Heaven, and to accomplish, by unblest means, what God had pronounced impracticable” [*Rev. W. Sparrow*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 5, 6. *He built Geba. Fortifications demolished.* 1. Men prostrated in their wicked design. 2. The materials by which they carried out that design captured and used for opposite purposes. Ramah taken, “the stones and timber” used to build other defences. Voltaire's printing press, by which he sought to deluge France with infidelity, fell into the hands of the Bible Society, and em-

ployed to spread the word of God. *The strongholds of the world become the defences of the Church.* I. This illustrated by the case of Ramah. II. It has been often observed since—1. The world's stronghold of science has been rifled by the Church for its defence, and the world defeated with its own weapons. 2. By the grace of God, men who were as Ramah—Saul of Tarsus for example—have been made as the outworks of

Christianity [*Bib. Museum*]. It is a fine use to which Bossuet has turned this military incident as illustrating the duty, not of rejecting the materials or the arguments collected by unbelievers or by heretics, but of employing them to build up the truth, "Bâtissons les forteresses de Juda des débris et des ruines de celles de Samarie" [*Stonley*].

Ver. 9. *Whatever is done in the world falls under the notice of God.* Not that he needs move from place to place, or run up and down from country to country to see what is done, for by one infinite, indivisible act, he beholdeth all things in all places; but the Scripture thus teaches the infallibility and particularity of his knowledge; even as we are said to know those things infallibly which we have viewed upon the place; for otherwise there is neither high nor low, far nor near, first nor last, to God all things being at once before him for ever (Jer. xxiii. 23). If the Lord is everywhere, let us everywhere see the Lord. Moses *saw him that was invisible*. Did we but keep this common principle warm upon our spirits, *The Lord seeth under the whole heaven*, how heavenly would our lives be! And seeing the Lord seeth as under the whole heaven, so into the hearts of all men, how should it deter us, even from heart sins, and the closest hypocrisy! Again, the Lord seeing in all things, disposeth all things. As his hand set up all in order at first, so his eye hath kept all in order ever

since, and will do for ever. Take these conclusions concerning the sight of God: *First*, the Lord beholdeth all things distinctly, not in gross only—the least as well as the greatest. He looks upon every parcel and opens the whole pack of human affairs. *Secondly*, he beholds every thing and person perfectly, fully, quite through. His is an intentive and most attentive view. *Thirdly*, in seeing he governs everything effectually and works it to his own ends. *Fourthly*, he seeth all things together, not successively, or one thing after another. He that is all eye seeth all at once, all is one. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Hence, take two inferences: the first serving for the instruction and consolation of all who know and fear God; and the second for conviction and terror to the wicked [*Caryl*].

Vers. 12-14. *Asa's End*. 1. Asa's sickness and death. At first affliction unimproved, grew more severe. Death sad, certain, and hopeful. 2. Asa's burial, magnificent, honoured, and admonitory. "The eminent piety and usefulness of good men," says one, "ought to be remembered to their praise, though they have had their blemishes. Let their faults be buried in their graves, while their services are remembered over their graves. He that said, 'There is not a just man that doeth good and sinneth not,' yet said also, 'The memory of the just is blessed,' and let it be so."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 3-6. *Silver*. "A bribe is a price: reward, gift, or favour bestowed or promised, with a view to pervert the judgment or corrupt the conduct of a judge, witness, or other person" [*Webster*]. "Philip of Macedon was a man of most invincible reason this way," says Addison. "He refuted by it all the wisdom of Athens—confounded their statesmen, struck their orators dumb, and at length argued them out of their liberties" [*quoted by Dr. Thomas*].

Ver. 9. *Strong*. Caesar was accustomed to write short letters. One of his generals, Quintus Cicero, was in great extremity, being besieged by fierce hordes of Gauls, when he received from him the following message: "Caesar to Cicero: Keep up your spirits. Expect help." Let us expect help from God, trust to him instead of relying on man in times of extremity and danger.

Ver. 10. *Wrath with the seer*. The most difficult province in friendship is

letting a man see his faults and errors, which should, if possible, be so contrived that he may perceive our advice is given him not so much to please ourselves as for his own advantage. The reproaches therefore of a friend should

always be strictly just and not too frequent [*Bacon*].

Vers. 13, 14. *Asa slept*.

"Kings then at last have but the lot of all,
By their own conduct they must stand or
fall" [*Couper*].

CHAPTER XVII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter is peculiar to the writer of Chronicles. Jehoshaphat becoming king takes measures for defence of his kingdom (vers. 1-9); in consequence grows in power (vers. 10-19).

Vers. 1-6.—*Jehoshaphat's measures for defence*. *Strengthened*, prepared to resist, to defend against attack from northern kingdom. Ver. 2. *Garrisons* or governors (*cf.* 1 Ki. iv. 7-19), all fortresses filled with troops, military stations established in various parts of the country and in cities of Mount Ephraim which belonged to Jehoshaphat (ch. xv. 8). Ver. 3. *First*, ancient imitated piety of his great ancestor in early part of his reign. *Baalim* in contrast with the *God of his father*, idol deities generally (Judg. ii. 11). Ver. 4. *Doings of Israel*. Special idolatrous customs of northern kingdom at the time and the worship of the calves. Ver. 5. *Presents*, freewill offerings, not ordinary taxes paid to royal treasury. "Some reason to believe that a 'benevolence' of this kind was expected as a matter of course at the accession of a new sovereign" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 6. *Lifted up*, not proud (chs. xxvi. 16; xxxii. 25); *exalted by the ways of Jehovah* (marg.), was encouraged, emboldened by a sense of Divine favour and ventured on reforms.

Vers. 7-11.—*Moral measures*. *Princes*, extraordinary commissioners and *priests* along with them. A deputation of five princes, nine Levites assisted by two priests, took a copy of the law with them, sent on tour in towns of Judah to give religious instruction to the people. Vers. 9-11. *Presents*, Philistines tributaries or wishing to become such; *Arabians*, nomad tribes on south of Dead Sea, sought protection and paid tribute in cattle.

Vers. 12-19.—*Jehoshaphat's greatness and prosperity*. *Castles*, places of defence situated for protection of roads, or valleys opening into the country (ch. xxvii. 4). *Store*, cities for keeping ammunition and provisions in preparation of siege. *Business*, much labour also expended on old "cities of Judah," besides building and fortifying other places. Vers. 14-19. "Whenever a census was taken among Israelites, the numbering was by tribes and families. Hence the expression in text, which occurs thirteen times in first chapter of Numbers" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Captains*, princes of thousands, highest officers in command. Three of them, *Adnah* the highest post. By the side of him who commanded largest division, Jehohanan and Amaziah had command of 280,000 and 200,000 men. Ver. 16. *Amaz*, a volunteer, or by an act of his own devoted himself to the service of Jehovah. Light-armed and heavy-armed troops waited on the king. "These numbers have been with good reason regarded as corrupt by most critics. They cannot be successfully defended either as probable in themselves or as in harmony with the other statements of the military force, or of the population, contained in our author" [*Speak. Com.*]. Others account for the numbers by including every one fit to bear arms in time of peace pursuing their daily callings; auxiliaries from tributary Philistines and Arabs; and all who on religious grounds attached themselves to the kingdom of Judah [*cf. Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S GOOD BEGINNING.—Verses 1-19.

Natural for Jehoshaphat to succeed his father, but in defending his kingdom he indicated a policy; in rising above his surroundings, resisting prevalent customs, and introducing reforms he made a good beginning. Taking the

chapter as a sketch—**I. Jehoshaphat's natural defences.** Jehoshaphat "strengthened himself against Israel." During Asa's decay Alab acted with vigour. Israel getting a formidable kingdom, needful for Jehoshaphat to bestir himself and maintain his own. This done not by league and bribe, but in natural, just, and quiet method against possible attack. A prudent man foresees the evil and prepares for it. The tempers of men must be watched, the threatenings of the times met, and weak places should be strengthened and guarded. To ignore inevitable tendencies, to act without foresight and preparation, most ruinous. **II. Jehoshaphat's moral reforms.** He cared for the spiritual welfare as well as for the outward security of the kingdom. Anxious to restore the worship of Jehovah, to instruct the people, and to administer justice (xix. 5). 1. *Reforms springing from personal piety.* He himself upright and sincere in serving God. A man of foresight and reverence, of deep conviction and uncompromising principle. One who felt God's presence more needful than garrisons in cities and forces on land. 2. *Reforms displaying zeal against idolatry.* He walked "not after the doings of Israel" (verse 4), was dead against calf worship, strictly adhered to Divine enactments, removed monuments, and destroyed groves which disgraced the land, and almost entirely cleansed it from idolatry (xx. 33). 3. *Reforms connected with the instruction of the people.* A commission of education was formed, equipped, and sent "about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people" (ver. 9). Kings and princes help a nation, not by stifling inquiry, attempting to force opinion and punishing heterodoxy; but by spreading education, encouraging virtue, and exalting God's word. Nations who receive this word most tolerant and intelligent, most philanthropic and exalted. **III. Jehoshaphat's consequent prosperity and honour.** In personal conduct separated alike from gross idolatry and Israelitish apostasy; in government ruling in the fear of God, and for the good of his subjects, "the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand." 1. *At home peace and plenty.* His people loyal and submissive, voluntary offerings abundant—"riches and honour" without stint. 2. *Abroad security and honour.* None disturbed his peaceful reign, hostile peoples bowed before him, the tributes of nations poured into his treasury, and the fear of God "fell upon all the kingdoms" with its restraining influence.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S UPRIGHTNESS.—Verses 3, 4.

Jehoshaphat expressly commended for integrity, even when condemned for his sin (xix. 3). This corresponds with his conduct at beginning of his reign, and the continuance of his uprightness after sad and untoward events. **I. A man's character is determined by his relation to God.** He acknowledged and "sought the Lord God of his father." In some relation all stand to God, and according to conduct, not creed, profession nor opinion, moral character and condition determined. **II. A man's character and course of life are specially observed by God.** David's life described in parts, each part under God's inspection. Youth, manhood, and old age; relapses and restorations known to him. Scripture lives detected, impartially given in temptations, failings, and virtues. "Thou, O Lord, knowest me: thou hast seen me and tried mine heart toward (with) thee" (Jer. xii. 3). **III. The latter part of a man's life may be worse than the first part.** "The first ways of his father David." A contrast between the earlier and the latter days of David, who relapsed and dishonoured in character. Age should bring wisdom, honour, and meetness for eternity. The seed ripens for the crop. Youth grows into maturity, and the student should give the accomplished scholar. Sad to deteriorate in life (Solomon, Jehoshaphat, &c.). "Sad when

you have to go back to a man's youth to find his virtues, or his most conspicuous excellences; but most beautiful when a man's earlier mistakes are lost in the richness and wisdom of his later conduct" [*Parker*]. **IV. The good only and not the evil in a man's life should be imitated.** Jehoshaphat walked in the godly ways of David; customary and easier to follow the evil. Multitudes and fashions influence; men naturally prone to the inferior and to forget the lofty and spiritual. The universal influence of bad examples presupposes a universal readiness to yield to it. "Be ye therefore followers (Greek, imitators) of God as dear children" (Eph. v. 1).

"Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For I have turned away my former self,
So will I those that keep me company" [*Shakes.*].

THE TEACHING COMMISSION.—*Verses 6-9.*

This a counterpoise to influences which had degraded Judah, and a continuation of Asa's reaction. These men employed eminently useful, though otherwise unknown. **I. The persons which composed the commission.** Officers of court and camp, of civil and religious authority. 1. *The princes.* A deputation of five to represent civil and constitutional government. 2. *The Levites.* Nine in number to instruct in ritual and temple service. 3. *The priests.* Two to explain the nature and enforce the duties of religion. The commission not warriors nor revolutionists, but reformers and revivalists. To educate the people in their duty to God, the king, and to each other. **II. The work which the commission had to perform.** Educational and religious. 1. *To teach the people.* "They taught in Judah" (ver. 9). Education required to chase away superstition, ensure just legislation, develop the energies, and alleviate the condition of the people. 2. *To expound the word.* "The book of the law" with them. God's law their text-book and authority. The command of the prince, the creed of the priest, and the ritual of the Levite not to displace God's word. A law above man, a book more than human to appeal to: a written statute, an authoritative declaration, a final revelation to which to call men's attention. "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." **III. The effects which followed the work of the commission.** The nation improved, reformed, and greatly blessed. 1. *In outward prosperity.* Peace and prosperity enjoyed; insurrections and wars prevented; unbroken opportunities for pursuit of education and commerce. 2. *In moral character.* People taught the law of God, returned to religious ways and worship. God's presence their defence and dignity (ver. 10). Such the effect of the Bible at all times. Its principles tend to civilise and elevate, reform and refine. It is the foe of oppression, the protector of the weak, and the Magna Charta of true liberty. What the boasted civilisation of ancient or modern nations without the Bible! Judge Bible teaching by its fruits! Everywhere it justifies its existence and claims. Its itinerant ministry and popular teaching in the providence of God has preserved this country from revolutions and wars amid the ruins and dissolutions of European nations!

JEHOSHAPHAT'S GREATNESS.—*Verses 12-19.*

I. In the extent of his possessions. "Castles and cities of store," places for victuals and arms. "He had much business," undertakings of religion, preparations for peace and war. A great kingdom and great responsibilities committed to his care. **II. In the vastness of his army.** The warriors

arranged in the army according to their father's houses. Consisted of five unequal divisions, comprised 1,160,000 men, without including those who garrisoned the fortresses. No monarch, since the time of Solomon, equalled Jehoshaphat in the extent of his revenue, in the strength of his fortifications, and the number of his troops [*Jamieson*]. **III. In the skill of his captains.** Five great generals, loyal in spirit, mighty in valour, and ready for any undertaking. "These waited on the king" (ver. 19).

"There is not a sovereign in Europe or in the world, but might read this chapter with advantage. 1. It shows most forcibly that true religion is the basis of the state; and that wherever it prospers, there the state prospers. 2. It shows also, that it is the wisdom of kings to encourage religion with all their power and influence; for if the hearts of the subjects be not bound and influenced by true religion, vain is the application of laws, fines, imprisonments, or corporal punishment of any kind. 3. A religious nation is ever a great nation; it is loved by its friends, it is dreaded by its enemies. 4. It is ever a peaceful and united nation: the blessings of religion, and a wholesome and paternal government, are so fully felt and prized, that all find it their interest to preserve and defend them. Harmony, peace, piety, and strength are the stability of such times. May Britain know and value them!" [*A. Clarke*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 4-6. *Jehoshaphat's religion.* 1. *Practical in its possession.* Not formal, complimentary, nor expedient for the times. A man of deep conviction, courage, and generous patriotism. If the end had only been as beginning, almost a complete character! 2. *Earnest in its nature.* He "sought" earnestly and constantly "the Lord God of his father." 3. *Prominent in its testimony.* For eighteen years—contemporary with Ahab and Jezebel, the period of Baalism in Israel—firm and faithful, "sought not unto Baalim." 4. *Self-denying in its example.* "Not after the doings of Israel," fashionable and prevalent; but "lifted up" in conformity to God and delight in God's service.

The workinghand and the happyheart. The chief things for a traveller on such a pilgrimage as ours is a right goal before him, the right road before him, the right impulse within him. The chief thoughts of which we are here reminded are: 1. Religion pervading our life—the Lord. 2. Activity pervading our religion—the ways. 3. Cheerfulness pervading our activity [*Christian Treasury*, 1859].

Vers. 7-11. *The royal edict.* I. We notice the edict of king Jehoshaphat:

1. Mark the benevolence displayed in

it; 2. Its policy was not inferior to its benevolence: 3. The benefits arising from it were incalculable. II. The manner in which it was carried into execution. This suggests—1. That loyalty to the king demands our concurrence with him in his good work; 2. That gratitude to the Jewish nation demands it at our hands; 3. A love to the rising generation should lead us to avail ourselves of the present opportunity to promote their welfare; 4. That a concern for the honour of our holy religion should operate to unite us all in executing the royal edict [*C. Simeon, M.A.*].

Ver. 13. *Business*, which he performed diligently, personally, and thoroughly. "Many works (LXX.) going forward at once; a negotious man was he. His business, say some, lay in beautifying and fortifying those cities. Augustus gloried at his death, that whereas he had found Rome built with brick, he had left it made of marble [*Trapp*].

Ver. 16. *Willingly offered himself.* The volunteer—1. Religious in spirit. Recognition of "the Lord." 2. Resolute in arms. The vows of God upon him. 3. Valiant in service. Like ancient votaries in Mohammedan armies, never

known to return home without victory. "The people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem."

"He always wins who sides with Thee,
To him no chance is lost;
Thy will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost" [F. W. Faber].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVII.

Vers. 3-5. *The Lord with him, stablished the kingdom, &c.* God is the only source of stability as infinite, absolute, and changeless. He gives stability to his word, church, and people. "In the great hand of God I stand" [*Shakespeare*].

Vers. 7-9. *The book of the law.* The influence of the Bible has been very efficient towards the introduction of a better and more enlightened sense of right and justice among the several governments of Europe. It taught the duty of benevolence to strangers, of humanity to the vanquished, of the obligation of good faith, of the sin of murder, revenge, and rapacity. The history of Europe, during the earlier periods of modern history, abounds with interesting and strong cases to show the authority of revelation over tur-

bulent princes and fierce warriors, and the effect of that authority in meliorating manners, checking violence, and introducing a system of morals which inculcate peace, moderation, and justice [*Chancellor Kent*].

Ver. 13. *Much business.* Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing is ever to be attained without it [*Sir Joshua Reynolds*]. All sorts of mischiefs happen to unoccupied professors of religion; there is no evil from which they are secure. Better would it be for them to accept the lowest occupation for the Lord Jesus than remain the victims of inaction [*Spurgeon*].

"Troubles spring from idleness,
And grievous toils from needless ease"
[*Franklin*].

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter relates Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab (vers. 1-3); induced to go to Ram-gil. (vers. 4-11); Micaiah's adverse prediction (vers. 12-17); continued reproof (vers. 18-22); and sufferings (vers. 23-28); the two kings enter battle with sad results (vers. 28-34). With this chapter corresponds 1 Ki. xxii. 1-35.

Vers. 1-3.—*Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab. Affinity.* Joram, his son, married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (xxi. 6). *Years.* in Jehoshaphat's seventeenth year, eight after marriage. *Killed,* gave magnificent feast to influence him in favour of enterprise. *Ramoth,* heights of Gilead, in territory of Gad, to wrest from King of Syria. Ver. 3. Jehoshaphat easily consents, without consulting God.

Vers. 4-11.—*The consultations.* Previous to declaration of war customary to consult prophets (1 Sam. xxviii.). Ahab complied. 400 prophets, creatures of Ahab connected with calf-worship, encouraged the king. Ver. 6. Jehoshaphat, dissatisfied, inquired for a true prophet; *besides,* in addition, or yet more. Ver. 7. Micaiah, known only from this incident, sent for. *Always evil,* lit., all his days, wanting in Kings. Ver. 8. *Officers,* eunuch or chamberlain. Ver. 9. Graphic scene, *void place (open space,* Rev. Vers.). A large area for markets, courts, and business. Each king on his portable throne, clothed in royal garments, and spectators all around. Ver. 10. *Zed,* more prominent than rest. *Had made* previously, in anticipation of some such occasion as now given [*Speak. Com.*].

Horns, like candle extinguishers (often worn as military ornaments); *iron*, symbol of military power. *Push*, a common metaphor for attacking and overcoming enemies. Thus two heroes impregnated; Kings of Israel and Judah would triumph (Deut. xxxiii. 17; Ps. xlv. 5; Dan. viii. 4).

Vers. 12-17.—*Micaiah's adverse prediction.* The well-intentioned messenger tries to persuade Micaiah to agree with majority, predict success, and be released from prison and severer punishment. He rejects counsel, remains fearless and firm. Ver. 14. *Go up*, the ironical answer of the 400, well understood by Ahab. *Adjure*, put on oath, he changes tone and becomes very serious. Ver. 16. *Saw*, purport of this vision that Israel would be defeated, dispersed, and king destroyed.

Vers. 18-28.—*Micaiah's reproof and sufferings.* *Saw* in providence of God events in fuller detail. Therefore *hear* the Divine will. *Sitting*, in splendour and supremacy (Ps. ix. 7; xi. 4; xlv. 6, &c.). *Standing*, about him on both sides. Ver. 19. *Entice*, persuade or deceive (1 Ki. xxii. 20). Ver. 20. *A spirit, the spirit, i.e.*, "the evil spirit," Satan some; others, "the spirit of prophecy" in the 400, under the control and command of the Governor of the universe, at his direction and permission. Ver. 21. *Lying spirit*, to mislead when consulted. "The details of a vision cannot safely be pressed any more than the details of a parable" [cf. *Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 23. *Zed.*, by this fearful disclosure, is vexed, presumed upon his favour with Ahab, smote Micaiah in contempt and scorn (Job xvi. 10; Jer. xx. 2; Lam. iii. 30; Mk. xiv. 65); and insinuates that the spirit did not speak by him. Ver. 24. The event would be a reply, when he would go from chamber to chamber, in some secret place. *To hide* himself in shame and fear of punishment for his false predictions. Ver. 25. Micaiah sent back to prison, with scanty prison fare; submitted, courageously reproves the king; predicts his death, and appeals to the people, who should witness the result.

Vers. 29-34.—*War undertaken.* Ahab afraid, disguises himself, ungenerously advises Jehosh. to fight in royal attire. Ver. 30. Command of King of Syria proves the prudence of Ahab's conduct. Ver. 31. Jehosh. only king in field. *Cried out*, whether to followers or to enemy, not stated. *Perceived*, probably from his cry, and pursuit ceased. Ver. 33. *Venture, i.e.*, in his simplicity, without special aim or intention. *Joints*, parts where pieces of armour fitted together. *Ahab wounded*, notwithstanding his precaution; kept standing in his chariot during the day the battle raged, at sunset all over. The war-cry went through the host, every man returned to his city and to his country. But Ahab was carried dead to Samaria, and there buried.

HOMILETICS.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLY FRIENDSHIP.—Verses 1-3.

Jehoshaphat displeased God by his choice of friends, and began a downward course, marked by gradual steps. **I. Friendship beginning with family affinity.** Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab" by uniting his son with Ahab's daughter. Perhaps proud, for he "had riches and honour in abundance," and did not want Jehoram "to marry beneath him." Nothing but marriage with a royal house would satisfy—perhaps to conciliate Israel and bring them back to Jehovah. Evil cannot be conciliated. This might be considered good policy, but morally wrong; disobedient to God's command, and brought the kingdom and royal house to verge of destruction. Unsuitable marriages to preserve name, property in family circle. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." **II. Friendship leading to social visits.** "After certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria." What more natural and needful to improve acquaintance and inquire about welfare! Received in royal style, but corrupted in moral character. Joins in converse with ungodly, can bear their company, and dwell in their house (Lot in Sodom). He becomes weaker, more complainant, and exposed to risk. "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? &c." **III. Friendship ending in alliance for war.** "He persuaded him to go up." Feasted so splendidly, friendship so close, extrication difficult. The height of incivility, most unreasonable to refuse! Evil wrought on his mind, spiritual constitution not proof against bad atmosphere. He lost power to testify; censure lost its energy; his presence no longer a restraint on

folly, and impossible to assume high tone and faithful attitude. "Let not the king say so," the only mild rebuke. Difficult to walk wisely, faithfully, and surely in these days of compromise and fashion. But God looks for entire separation from the world in character, purpose, and conduct. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?"

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION: WAR OR NO WAR?—Verses 4-22.

Ahab, tired of waiting for peaceful restoration of Ram-gil., determined to recover it from the Syrians by force. Aware of the military strength of the Syrian king (1 Ki. xxii. 3, 4), he takes advantage of visit and friendship of Jehoshaphat, whose resources are great, and who suggests an immediate inquiry of the Lord before expedition. **I. The tribunal before which to decide.** Picture the open space (ver. 9). The kings robed in splendour; the prophets in their imposing ranks and display, confident and insolent in their lying message; the one true prophet, hated by Ahab, uncared for by spectators, yet calm, brave, and true! Luther before the Diet of Worms. **II. The judgments given.** Two kinds from two parties. 1. *From false prophets.* "Ahab gathered his prophets together, about 400 men." Every great enterprise seeks the sanction of God and to clothe itself with Divine authority. Right and wrong of actions felt to be determined by One higher than man. If Heaven's signature not gained often forged. Ahab multiplied pagan prophets as Julian multiplied pagan sacrifices. A band ready to interpret divine decrees in favour of the king they serve. Think of their *number, office, and unanimity!* With one consent they say, Go! 2. *From the true prophet.* Jehoshaphat not satisfied; saw from their manner they were not truthful, not Jehovah-prophets; asks for "a prophet of the Lord, that he might inquire of him." The *vox populi* not always the *vox Dei*. Micaiah sent for, appears, determines to speak the truth fearless of consequences. "Athanasius against the world." In terms of irony, in visions of splendour, when adjured by the king and in appealing to the people. Smitten by the priests and threatened with the prison, the same answer given. **III. War foolishly undertaken.** Ahab bent on war, Jehoshaphat unable to check him. "And they went to the battle" (ver. 29). 1. *Reluctantly by Jehoshaphat.* Ventured too much and gone too far; ensnared and drawn along. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." 2. *Timidly by Ahab.* Desired to falsify prediction, and disguised himself. What a cowardly act! What friendship to preserve your own life at the expense of another! "A good cause makes a stout heart." A soldier conscious of right, accompanied by God, will stand fearless and victorious on the field of battle. **IV. War ending in disasters.** Death to Ahab. To Jehoshaphat danger in the field, deserved rebuke from God's servant (xix. 2), invasion of the kingdom, and almost total extinction of the family (xxii. 10). Ever dangerous to fight against God. Enterprises opposed to his will can never prosper. Inquire, Shall I go or shall I not? When decision known, submit, and escape the ruin.

"We leap at stars, and fasten in the mud,
At glory grasp, and sink in infamy" [Young].

THE FAITHFUL PROPHET.—Verses 7-27.

I. The estimation in which he was held. "I hate him." Counted like Elijah as an enemy by Ahab. Micaiah consistent in veracity, courage, and reproof. The king offended, and imputed all to evil disposition, personal grudge. Hatred, inveterate and strong, often the reward of fidelity. "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

If, The stand which he takes. "What my God saith, that will I speak" (ver. 13). 1. *Dependence upon God.* In God's hands, not Ahab's. "So help me God," cried Luther. "Fear him who can destroy both body and soul." 2. *Expectation of God's help.* Assured that God would say something, teach him, and reveal light. Disciples before councils (Mat. x. 18-19). 3. *Determination to utter God's word.* "That will I speak." Balaam could make no compromise. Reverent attention to divine truth, and determination to die rather than withhold or betray it, the mark of a true prophet. **III. The pleas urged to move him from this stand.** The messenger in kindness warned and advised. 1. *The opinion of the majority.* 400 prophets unanimous in decision! Think of their power and position! Why be singular and foolish in opposing? Agree with the multitude. Unity built on truth, better than unity built on men. 2. *The difficulty of judging who is right.* "Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to thee?" Zedekiah having it to possess the spirit alone, ridiculed in scorn the idea of Micaiah assuming it. Circumstances make it difficult to judge who is right among many claimants. But there is a divine word; man can understand and receive it, must judge and decide for himself. Know by results. False prophets assume authority, take fulfilment of truth in their own hands, despise and persecute others. True prophets receive and utter the word, leave it with God to verify and vindicate it. 3. *The employment of physical force.* This is a tyrant's weapon. The screw, the prison, and the stake, bonds, persecution, and martyrdom in vain. Micaiah calm in suffering, as bold in action, immovable as a rock, honoured and exalted in Israel as independent and true, when prophets of Ahab are confounded and scattered in shame and disgrace.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Ver. 2. *Went down. The royal visit.*
 1. The object for which made. 2. Results to which led. "The bond between the two families dates, therefore, at least from this time, but apparently it had not hitherto led to any very close intimacy, much less to any joint military expeditions. Jehoshaphat seems to have taken no part in the former Syrian wars of Ahab, nor did he join with the great league against the Assyrians. From this time till the displacement of Ahab's dynasty by Jehu, very intimate relations subsisted between the two kingdoms (cf. 1 Ki. xxii. 49; 2 Ki. iii. 7; viii. 28; 2 Chr. xx. 36) [*Speak. Com.*].

Ver. 4. *Enquire.* God, forgotten in men's undertakings, should always be

sought, and sought without delay. "Enquire to-day." Ahab never thought of this. God not in his thoughts (Ps. x. 4). If Scipio went first to the capital, and then to the senate; if the Romans consulted gods and offered sacrifices before war, should we not enquire, &c.?

Vers. 5-7. *I hate him.* A picture of present time. 1. *Men love to be flattered.* Ahab, satisfied with his prophets, thought they were inspired and would listen to no one else. 2. *Men speak lies to flatter their superiors,* servants their masters, courtiers their sovereigns. Thus the very fountains of life corrupt. Prophets, priests, and judges encourage falsehood. "A wonderful and horrible thing (astonish-

ment and filthiness) is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means (lit., according to their hands, *i.e.*, under their guidance and power), and my people love to have it so" (Jer. v. 30, 31). (*Populus vult decipi, et decipiatur*). 3. *In speaking lies they are influenced by supernatural powers.* Such powers exist and mysteriously influence the minds of men. Lying spirits are subtle, wise, and numerous; have easy access to men and deceive. Seek to hear not what is palatable to our corrupt hearts, but what is true, needful, and profitable to our souls.

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies!

He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies.

And he that *will* be cheated to the last,

Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast" [*Cowper*].

Vers. 8-11. *A performance at court.* Picture place, kings on their separate thrones, spectators and performance. Zed. in employing a symbolic action was following the example of a former Israelite prophet, whose "acted parable" could never be forgotten in Israel (*cf.* 1 Ki. xi. 30) [*Speak. Com.*].

Ver. 13. *A faithful ministry.* 1. The necessity imposed on faithful ministers to speak the truth. God requires it, needful to the welfare of the people, and consequences of neglect fearful. 2. The results of speaking truth. Hated by those in authority, ridiculed and opposed by rivals, treated with indifference, cruelty, and death.

"So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he"

[*Milton*].

HOMILETICS.

THE PROPHETIC VISIONS.—Verse 16.

Solemnly urged to give a serious answer, Micaiah declared the visions revealed to him by the spirit of God. **I. The shepherdless people.** "I did see all Israel scattered," &c. (ver. 16). 1. *The death of the king.* Ministers and kings shepherds of the people to feed, govern, and protect. Ahab fell in battle, and Israel deprived of ruler. "These have no master." 2. *The defeat of the army.* "All Israel scattered," in broken ranks and helpless condition. A picture of society away from God and divided from one another; inadequately supplied with helpers, and needing a compassionate Saviour (Mat. ix. 36-38). **II. The parabolic Providence.** "It may be doubted whether we ought to take literally, and interpret exactly, each statement of the narrative. Visions of the invisible can only be a sort of parables: revelations not of truth as it actually is, but of so much of truth as can be shown through such a medium. The details of a vision, therefore, cannot safely be pressed, any more than the details of a parable. Portions of each must be accommodations to human modes of thought, and may very inadequately express the realities which they are employed to shadow forth to us" [*Speak. Com.*]. 1. *A picture of God's supremacy.* "The Lord sitting upon his throne," supreme in authority, wisdom, and splendour (Is. vi. 1). 2. *An insight into supernatural ministry.* "All the host of heaven" ready to serve. "Satan walks to and fro in the earth" in restless activity to do mischief to God's people (Job i. 7). Other spirits sent on divine errands (Zech. i. 10; Dan. vii. 10). 3. *An interpretation of the events of history.* Why does this happen? God orders or permits it. Sometimes heaven is opened to shadow forth events on earth. God's seers only can interpret and apply the vision—a privilege to them and a warning to us.

LYING SPIRITS IN THE PROPHETS.—Verses 18-22.

This chapter gives an insight into the meaning of the awful word "temptation." Yet comforting, for it shows how God is long-suffering and merciful to

the most hardened sinner; how to the last he puts before him good and evil, and warns him of his choice and the ruin to which it leads. I. What warning more awful, yet more plain, than that of the text? Ahab, told that he was listening to a lie, had free choice to follow that lie or not, and did follow it. After imprisonment of Micaiah for speaking the truth to him, he went to Ram-gilead; yet felt that he was not safe. He went into battle disguised, hoping to escape from evil by these means. But God's vengeance not checked by paltry cunning. II. This chapter tells us not merely how Ahab was tempted, but how *we* are tempted in these very days. By every wilful sin we commit we give room to the devil. By every wrong step we take knowingly, we give a handle to some evil spirit to lead us seven steps further wrong. Yet in every temptation God gives us a fair chance, sends his prophets, as he sent Micaiah to Ahab, to tell us that the wages of sin is death, to set before us good and evil at every turn, that we may choose between them and live and die according to choice. The Bible is a prophet to us. Every man a prophet to himself. The still small voice in the heart, the voice of God within us; the spirit of God striving with our spirits, whether we will hear or forbear, setting before us what is righteous, noble, pure, and godlike, to see whether we will obey that voice, or obey our own selfish lusts, which tempt us to please ourselves [*C. Kingsley*, "Village Sermons"].

DIVINE TRUTH AND ITS TYPICAL RECEPTION.

Bible full of human nature. Humanity in varied aspects its excellence and chief feature. A book for the world. Its biographies. "Representative men." Here four types of human conduct in relation to divine truth. **I. Those who seek the truth.** Micaiah believed in its existence, prayed for its teaching, and determined to follow its leading. Sought truth under impression of its reality, from the right source, in order to render homage to it. "Lead me by thy truth and teach me." **II. Those who are opposed to the truth.** The priests assumed to be its only depositories, denied the claims of others, ridiculed and opposed its representative. None so slow to believe in a Divine spirit as those accustomed to speak Divine words, but in whose hearts is no Divine life. A lifeless church always bitterest enemy to inquiry, reform, and independency. "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth." **III. Those who believe yet disobey the truth.** J. believed the prophet Micaiah, mildly defended his character, yet would not withdraw from Ahab. He sinned against light and better judgment. Risky thus to act. "Holding (*i.e.*, keeping down, obscuring, overbearing) the truth in (a course of) unrighteousness" is the way to bring down the judgment of God (Rom. i. 18), to lose the ability to perceive it, and the power to embrace and practise it.

"Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide" [*Curper*].

IV. Those who are alarmed at truth. Ahab roused in conscience, afraid of results, and tried to escape by stratagem. The dupe of his own fears. The child whom Herod sought to destroy lived, grew, and rose to sovereignty of the universe. The prediction of Micaiah fulfilled, terror struck into hearts of soldiers, and the king died in blood-stained chariot.

GOSPEL ARCHERY.—Verse 33.

I. The hearts of the unsaved are encased in harness. The harness of (1) Indifference, (2) pleasure, (3) worldliness, (4) religious formality. II. Having

these harnessed hearts for a mark, the gospel bow must be drawn. At some must be shot the arrows of (1) Divine goodness, (2) Divine threatenings, (3) Divine love [*R. Berry*]

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 18-22. *Lying spirits*. 1. *A doctrine of Scripture* (Jud. ix. 23; Job i. 6; ii. 1; Ez. xiv. 9; Jno. viii. 44; Rev. xii. 9). 2. *A fact in experience*. Eve seduced. Many now under strong delusion (error energising and effectual) that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). 3. *A mystery of providence*. The problem of human character, of human life and destiny insolvable on any other hypothesis. Inscrutable providence!

Ver. 31. *Jehoshaphat's cry*. 1. Danger the result of warning unheeded. 2. God interfering to deliver. God may be displeased, never deserts when we cry unto him. Ahab cared not to succour. God moved them to depart from him. 3. Lesson, associate with evil-doers, then in danger of sharing their calamities. "A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good."

Learn from the whole—1. That the contrivances of the wicked are cruel (Prov. xii. 5, 10). 2. That in carrying out these contrivances they are greatly alarmed. Conscience makes them

cowards (Prov. xxviii. 1). 3. That in the end their fears are realised. In attempt to ensnare others ensnared themselves (Prov. xii. 13; xxiv. 15, 16; xxvi. 27); expectations of good disappointed (Prov. x. 2-28; xxiv. 19, 20), and their iniquity becomes their punishment (Prov. v. 22; xi. 3; xiv. 32).

Ver. 33. *Accidents of Providence*. I. The end certain. Bow did its work. Darts of judgment, designs of Providence, never miss the mark. II. The method of accomplishing the end apparently accidental. At a venture, casual shot. The hand strengthened, shaft levelled with unerring eye. What we term chance, casualty, really Providence accomplishing deliberate designs, but interposition concealed. 1. A comfort to godly in trouble, sorrow, and peril. 2. A warning to ungodly, who are not safe, exposed everywhere. Most common occurrences, those from which we suspect no harm, may prove destructive to life.

"The all-surrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XVIII.

Vers. 1-3. *Friendship*. It is good discretion not to make too much of any man at the first, because one cannot hold out that proportion [*Bacon*].

Vers. 7-22. *Lying spirits*. Compare Elijah's tone (1 Ki. xviii. 27). "In the vision which he describes we feel that we are gradually drawing nearer to the times of the later prophets. It is a vision which might rank with those of Isaiah or Ezekiel" [*Stanley*]. Not by any stroke of vengeance, but by the very network of evil counsel which he has woven for himself, is the King of Israel to be led to his ruin [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 29. *Disguised*. As knowledge

without justice ought to be called cunning rather than wisdom, so a mind prepared to meet danger, if excited by its own eagerness and not the public good, deserves the name of audacity rather than of courage [*Plato*].

Ver. 33. *Bow at a venture*. It is marvellous to note on what small contingencies depends our life. An accidental blow, an unexpected fall, a mistake in drinking out of the wrong cup, a misstep in the dark, a fly, a fishbone, the smallest things often occasion its termination. This fact is serious enough to cool ambition, make us thoughtful in merriest moods, and watchful against any surprise that death may

have in reserve for us. *Deal*—"The truth cannot be burned, beheaded, or crucified. A lie on the throne is a lie still, and truth in a dungeon is still

truth; and the lie on the throne is on the way to defeat, and the truth in the dungeon is on the way to victory."

CHAPTER XIX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter is entirely additional to Kings, and of great interest. It deals with three matters only, the rebuke addressed to Jehosh. by the prophet Jehu (vers. 1-3); the personal efforts of Jehosh. to effect a religious reformation (ver. 4); and his reform of the judicial system (vers. 5-11) [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-3.—*The Rebuke of Jehosh.* In peace, without capture or pursuit; a fulfilment of prophecy (ch. xviii. 16). *Jehu*, son of Hanani (xx. 34), of Northern Kingdom in time of Baasha (1 Ki. xvi. 1). *Went out* (xv. 2). *Help*, make common cause with Ahab. *Wrath*, God angry, and caused expedition to fail, or may be in the invasion of kingdom about to happen. Ver. 4. Rebuke mild, "good things" (cf. xii. 12; 1 Ki. xiv. 13). *Groves*, stocks of trees representing Ashtoreth (xiv. 3; xvii. 4-6).

Vers. 4-11.—*The Reforms of Jehosh.* *Went, turned and went out.* Again, efforts for instruction resumed, and secured full complement of teachers from the tribe of Levi now fixed in Judah. *Vers. 5-7.* *Instructions to judges.* Jehosh. appointed fresh judges, enlarged their staff and number; limited to *fenced cities*, by concentrating power in the hands of a few, or creating superior courts. Ver. 6. *Judge* not at dictation or in compliance with wishes of men, but for *Jehovah* (Deut. i. 17; xvi. 18-20). *In judgment*—i.e., in your decisions. Ver. 7. *Iniquity of inequality or undue leaning to one side* (cf. Deut. x. 17; xvi. 19). *Vers. 8-11.*—*Instructions to the priests and Levites.* Ver. 8. *Chief*, great patriarchal chiefs, heads of great houses or clans. "It is interesting to find that such persons were now admitted to share in the judicial office, which seems in David's time to have been confined to the Levites" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Judgment of the Lord.* Disputes in religious matters, payments to temple, offerings for firstborn, &c. *Controversies*, ordinary civil cases. *Jerusalem*, seat of supreme tribunal (Ex. xviii. 19; Deut. xvii. 8-13), which was composed of three classes, to review appellate cases from inferior courts in two divisions, ecclesiastical and civil affairs. Decisions of provincial judges might be carried to Jerusalem as a court of appeal [cf. *Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 10. *Blood*, case of murder or homicide as to degree of blood-guiltiness (Ex. xxi. 12-23). *Law and command*, when a conflict of laws, clashing one with another. *Warn*, admonish them to abstain from wrong, and avoid God's vengeance on the nation. Ver. 11. *A chief*, high priest, president of court in religious concerns. *Zeb.*, in civil or criminal affairs. *Levites*, superintending managers, assistants, and servants about court. *The good*, God with upright judges (cf. v. 6; xv. 2-6). *Deal*, take courage and act.

HOMILETICS.

THE STERN REBUKE.—Verses 1-3.

Alliance between two kingdoms against a common enemy, substitution of friendship for hatred and distrust, wise steps to worldly politicians. But one thing against it. Ahab, an idolator, had introduced a new religion of most degraded type. Jehosh. did not reject this alliance. As Hanani rebuked Asa for league with Ben. (ch. xvi. 7), so his son instructed to rebuke Jehosh. for league with wicked Ahab. Military success from Jehovah; unlawful alliance, if

persisted in, will forfeit this blessing. **I. In a timely season.** "J. went out to meet him," at earliest possible moment, when king had been preserved, and returning in peace. Hence in fit mind to listen. Rebuke should be timely, in "due season," then it comes down upon the heart like rain upon the new-mown grass. **II. In faithful words.** Jehu direct and faithful. "Thou hast helped the ungodly, and loved them that hate the Lord." No toning down, nor mincing matters. Man's reproofs sometimes undeserved, implying guilt which exists not. Divine reproofs truthful, needful, and attested by conscience. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." **III. In mitigating circumstances.** "Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee" (ver. 3). God displeased, but overlooks not "good things"; in wrath remembers mercy; withholds judgments, and waits to see how Jehosh. will act in future. In the Church at Ephesus all that God can find to approve put foremost, and only afterwards notes shortcomings (Rev. ii. 2-4). Then (ver. 6) returns to praise and console. We should have more pleasure in commending than in fault-finding.

I. The friendship of wicked men one of the most dangerous temptations to which Christians are subjected. Modern life in cities illustrates this with special force. 1. The wealth of the world is largely in the hands of men who are not friends of Christ. 2. In many communities intelligence and culture are possessed mainly by the irreligious. 3. Interests of business sometimes create similar peril. 4. In a higher circle of life professional success often tempts young men of aspiring mind to seek to ally themselves with those who love not God. **II.** Of this trial of Christian principle, it may be said that the Christian religion requires no narrow or ascetic seclusion from the world. The thing which Christian principle forbids is seeking worldly friendships and alliances for selfish ends and to the peril of religious usefulness and religious character. **III.** The irreligious friendships of religious men violate the ruling spirit of the Scriptures. It is a policy of life which starts wrong; therefore threatens catastrophe in the end. **IV.** Entangling alliances with the world often involve immense sacrifice of Christian usefulness. **V.** Christian alliances with the wicked do not command the respect of the very men for whose favour they are formed. **VI.** Loving those that hate God inflicts a wound of great severity on the feelings of Jesus Christ. It is from Calvary that the voice comes to each in our solitude, "Shouldest thou love them that hate the Lord?" [*A. Phelps, O.T. a Living Bk.*].

THE REFORMING TOUR.—Verses 4-7.

While Jehosh. sought to maintain alliance, he was careful to show that he had no sympathy with idolatry, and determined to keep his people from it. Hence a second tour to reform what had gone wrong and complete what was wanting. **I. The noble design of the tour.** Not to strengthen defences, revive trade, or relieve distress. 1. *To administer justice.* "He set judges in the land," in centres convenient and accessible. 2. *To bring the people back to God.* Many perhaps revolted to idolatry when they saw the king familiar with idolators. Hence to counteract our bad influence and restore the fallen. **II. The vast extent of the tour.** Personal inspection through the whole kingdom from the extreme south to extreme north, from Beer-sheba to Mount Ephraim. No place should be overlooked, no enemy spared in religious reforms. **III. The beneficent results of the tour.** Personal and thorough, results encouraging. 1. *Local courts established.* Existed before; Jehosh. the first king to modify them according to requirements of kingdom. Fixed in

fortified cities the provincial capitals of the districts (*cf.* Deut. xvi. 18-20). 2. *Judicial administration purified.* Special instruction to judges, high and lofty motives put before them. Soldiers must not abuse their power by violence and wrong; magistrates must not degrade their character by injustice and partiality. All duties to be performed to God, not to man (*ver.* 6).

THE SUPREME TRIBUNAL.—*Verses 8-11.*

This institution or Metropolitan Court founded on Ex. xviii. 19-26; Deut. vii. 8-13. Notice—**I. Its representative character.** Three classes—Levites, priests, and chief of fathers; persons learned in law, eminent for wisdom, and of mature age and experience. “Peers of the realm.” **II. Its presiding officers.** Amariah, high priest over religious causes. “In all matters of the Lord.” Zebadiah supreme in civil court. To assist both, the Levites were a kind of counsellors. **III. Its executive powers.** Appeal made from inferior courts to this. Pleas for the crown and for religious observances in one division. In other division common pleas. *Controversies* between party and party; differences of *blood*, manslaughter or accidental murders, or *consanguinity*, settlement of inheritance and family claims. Civil affairs *between law and commandments*. Conflicts between moral rites and precepts of law, &c. “Without good and wholesome *laws* no nation can be prosperous, and vain are the best laws if they be not *judiciously* and *conscientiously* administered. The things of *God* and the things of the *king* should never be confounded in the administration of justice. Amariah the priest, and Zebadiah the ruler, should ever have their distinct places of jurisdiction” [*A. Clarke*].

A TONIC PROMISE.—*Verse 11.*

Explain what is meant by “good.” The melancholy fact that *all* men are not good. The promise of the text justifies three inquiries: (1) Why should the good be *fearful*? “They that be with us,” &c. (2) How can *bad designs* finally prevail? (3) How are men to know that God is *surely with them*? The answer involves *character*. It is not the Lord shall be with the great, the rich, the old, &c., but with the *good*. God identifies himself with all that is good in *thought* as well as in *act*; in *purpose* as well as in *service*. This is the security of the world. Even when the godly *man* ceaseth, God will maintain the cause that is *good*.

This promise, like all the promises of God, is designated not as a sedative, but a *stimulant*. *Deal courageously!* See how the text might have read: The Lord shall be with the good, therefore *sit still*; the Lord shall be with the good, therefore let *wickedness* have *all its own way in the world*; the Lord shall be with the good, therefore *pay no attention to self-discipline*. The text reads contrariwise. The Lord shall be with the good, therefore *deal courageously*. Goodness is not to be merely passive, it is to be active, aggressive, defiant of all evil, sublime in patience [*Dr. Parker, City Temple*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-3. *Jehoshaphat's connection with Ahab.* I. What is that intimacy with the ungodly which God forbids? 1. An alliance with them. 2. A conformity with them. 3. An unnecessary association with them. II. Why is it so displeasing to God? 1. On account of the state of mind it implies. 2. On account of its pernicious tendency. 3. On account of its opposition to his revealed will [*Dr. Chapin*].

Ver. 7. God's Justice. 1. God just

and righteous in himself. On justice all his proceedings are based and regulated. He is "the Just One," "Most just," "Just and right is he" (*cf.* Deut. x. 17; xvi. 19; xxxii. 4). 2. Just and righteous in the gift of just laws to mankind. Laws adapted to their natures, powers, and condition. The moral code so right and benevolent as to require no proof. Supreme love to God and true regard to our neighbour. 3. Just and righteous in the administration of these laws—strictly and impartially here. No favouritism, conniving at guilt, or overlooking sin. In Christ justice and holiness displayed, and God the justifier of him that believeth. At last no iniquity nor respect in the bestowment of rewards and punishments.

Vers. 6, 7. *Address to Judges.* 1. In *office* they represent God, act worthy of God, represent not his law, express not his will as crooked and corrupt. "Ye judge not for man, but for the Lord." 2. In *spirit* the must fear God. Fear to offend One who sees and knows all. 3. In *decisions* be impartial and just. Give sentence deliberately in conformity with truth. Judges, ministers, all in high position should be remarkable for integrity, and free from bribery and corruption.

"Be just and fear not,
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy
country's,
Thy God's, and truth's" [*Shakes.*].

CHAPTER XX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Narrative to ver. 30 entirely additional to Kings. Invasion of Moabites (vers. 1-3); fast and supplication of king and people (vers. 3-13); the message of Jahaziel (vers. 14-19); exhortation and victory of Jehoshaphat (vers. 20-30); close of his reign (vers. 31-37), which runs parallel with 1 Ki. xxii. 41-49.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Invasion of Moabites.* Ammonites, Sept., some of the Minœi, inhabitants of Maon (Mehunins), a town near Petra. Ver. 2. *Sea*, Dead Sea. *Edom*, *Huz-tam*, having come round southern extremity of Dead Sea and entered Judæa from Edom.

Vers. 3-13.—*Fast and supplication.* *Set himself*, his face (resolved, *cf.* 2 Ki. xii. 18; Jer. xlii. 15). *Seek*, *i.e.*, to turn to Jehovah to implore help (xv. 12, 13). *Fast*, national, the first "proclaimed" by authority. *New*, one of the two courts in Solomon's temple, renovated by Jehoshaphat or by Asa (xv. 8), known now as "the new court." Vers. 6-12. The supplication. Ver. 6. An appeal to God, omnipotent, supreme, and irresistible. Ver. 7. To God's covenant, who gave them possession of land. *Friend*, first historic use of this title, though repeated Is. xli. 8; Jas. ii. 23. Ver. 8. To God as owner of temple. Ver. 9. A brief summary of cases described in Solomon's prayer (ch. vi. 22-39). Vers. 10, 11. Invaders whom Israel were not permitted to touch (Edom, Deut. ii. 5; Moab, ii. 9; Ammon, ii. 19), have now entered the land to cast us out. Ver. 12. In despair God sought. *Eyes*, *i.e.*, we look to thee for succour (*cf.* Ps. xxv. 15; cxli. 8).

Vers. 14-19.—*The Message of Jahaziel.* A prophet not elsewhere mentioned, but his claim verified by message and results. Ver. 15. Words familiar to people and connected with great deliverances (Deut. i. 21; Josh. i. 9, &c.) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 16. *Cliff*, ascent of Ziz (Hazziz) at end of brook, gully, or dry torrent course. Ver. 17. *Stand still*, directed to do nothing, watch the Lord's course (Ex. xiv. 13, 14; Num. xiv. 9). Ver. 18. Reverent obedience in confidence and gratitude. Ver. 19. Praise from Kohathites in general, from Korhites, a branch of them, in particular.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The March and Exhortation.* *Went forth early.* Tekoa, ten or eleven miles from Jerusalem, southerly direction. *Stood*, exhorted them to be firm and confident. *Singers*, line of procession arranged, signal to move forward; Levites led van with musical

instruments and song (Ps. cxxxvi.). Vers. 22-30. Overthrow of the enemy. *Ambush*, liers in wait. *Edomites* intending to attack Jews, but through panic fell upon Moabites, and rest of enemy or *angels* employed by God to confuse the host and destroy it. Ver. 24. Work completed before Israel on the field, which was strewn with dead bodies. They had not to fight, but to collect and carry away spoil. Ver. 26. Set out on fourth day to return in same joyful mood as they came. Ver. 29. Fear salutary fell on surrounding kingdoms and brought blessings at home.

Vers. 30-33.—(*Close of Jehoshaphat's reign* (1 Ki. xxii. 41-50). Steadfast and consistently religious (xv. 18), yet people not wholly diverted from idolatry. In deference to popular prejudice all high places not taken away. *Words* of Jehoshaphat not elsewhere noticed, entered into the book of Kings of Judah, same apparently as the Chronicles of Kings of Judah, mentioned in Kings [*Murphy*].

Vers. 35-37.—*Alliance with Ahaziah*, closely on death of Ahab, whom A. survived little more than a year (1 Ki. xxii. 51; 2 Ki. iii. 1). *Ships*, combined fleet destined for Tartessus, but wrecked. *Eliczer* denounced the unholy alliance. Ahaziah attributed the disaster to unskillfulness of Jehoshaphat's sailors; proposed to fit out another joint fleet with his own subjects. Jehoshaphat accepted the wreck as a judgment and declined the offer (cf. 1 Ki. xxii.).

HOMILETICS.

JESHOPHATH'S WAR WITH MOABITES AND THEIR ALLIES.—Verses 1-30.

Defeated in a great battle by Joram and Jehoshaphat, the Moabites sought to retaliate (2 Ki. iii.). Combined with their kinsmen, they entered Judah and defied its king. **I. The invading enemy.** Formidable, near, and brought surprise. 1. *In a spirit of boldness.* Great in number of auxiliaries, far advanced, and most eager for the fight. 2. *In a spirit of ingratitude.* "Behold how they reward us" (ver. 11). Israel not permitted to touch them nor disturb them in the least in the march through wilderness (Deut. ii. 5; ix. 19). Jehoshaphat had lately helped them, now they seek to get the land for themselves. Cast Israel out, and thus to requite them evil for good! "O our God, wilt thou not judge them?" (ver. 12). **II. Jehoshaphat's preparations to meet this army.** Alarmed at the intelligence, the danger brings out his religious feeling. He is equal to the occasion, does not call his forces, but determines to seek God. 1. *He proclaims a national fast.* The people of Judah hasten to Jerusalem. The nation bowed before God and confessed their sins as one man. The scene touching and solemn, emergency great. 2. *He implores God's help.* Prayer embraces every argument which king and people could urge; concluding with earnest appeal for God to protect them. (a) *They are helpless.* No power, "we have no might;" no plan, "neither know we what to do;" no allies, their wives and little ones only increased their anxiety (ver. 13). (b) *God could help them.* "In thine hand is there not power and might?" (ver. 6). God supreme and omnipotent, checks the enemy and defends his people. (c) *They rely upon God.* "Our eyes are up unto thee" in hope and earnest expectation. **III. The encouragement given.** Help is promised. Words familiar and inspiring fell from the mouth of the prophet, given by inspiration. 1. *Fears are calmed.* "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude" (ver. 15). Cowardice shall flee, and courage shall keep the field. 2. *Assurance is renewed.* "The Lord will be with you" (ver. 17). That should be sufficient for any contest! 3. *Implicit trust is required.* "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established" (ver. 20). 4. *Specific directions are given.* "To-morrow go ye down against them, ye shall find them at the end of the brook" (ver. 16). **IV. The method of attack.** Great joy and relief at the prophet's message. With humble confidence they prepared for assault. 1. *They engaged in reverent worship.* The king bowed to the ground, the people "fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord" (ver. 18).

2. *They united in joyful praise.* Singers were appointed to praise the Lord for his mercy (ver. 21). 3. *They formed orderly procession.* Officials and people united in ranks, and preceded by "singers," marched till they came "to the watch-tower in the wilderness" (ver. 24). 4. *They fought in confidence of victory.* God had helped them in past (ver. 7); promised at dedication of temple that he would help them again (ver. 9). None trust him in vain. **V. The victory achieved.** Easy, most signal, and wrought for them, not by them. 1. *By divine agency.* Whether by hosts of angels or ambushments of their own, we cannot eliminate divine agency. 2. *By self-extermination.* In confusion they fell upon their friends, whom they mistook for enemies. God turned them against themselves, and the army that came to fight Jehoshaphat destroyed itself. God can touch the reason of the king, rob the general of command, and blind the soldiers. A thousand ways at his disposal of which we know nothing. But victory sure to those who have him as leader. "The battle is not yours, but God's." **VI. The impression of the event on Jews and neighbours.** Report spread in surrounding people; influence remarkable. 1. *In giving security and peace to Judah.* Nations feared to molest a people who worshipped a God who did such wonders. Idolators felt that he had justified claims to their homage. They were still satisfied among themselves. "So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet" (ver. 30). 2. *In exercising salutary influence upon others.* God's victory ended wars; the fear of God fell on all kingdoms, restrained them from invading Judah. Probably now tribute was brought to Jehoshaphat from Philistines and Arabians (cf. ch. xvii. 11). "For his God gave him rest round about."

MAN'S EXTREMITY IS GOD'S OPPORTUNITY.—*Verses 5-13.*

Learn—I. **That in the discipline of life we should expect dangers and extremities.** These needful to touch and develop our powers. History in Old and New Testament full of instances. To know other resources we must learn the weakness of our own. "We have no might against this." II. **That in these dangers and extremities God has many ways of deliverance.** Human agency but a small part of holy ministry. Birds and beasts, insects, elements of nature, and hosts of angels under his command. Hence the folly of proscribing, measuring, or limiting in God's work. III. **That in all dangers and extremities of life we should look to God for help.** Depend not upon numbers, generalship, and human might; but spiritual force, prayer, and presence of God. Then war easy, loses character of conflict, and becomes a matter of spoil.

THE BATTLE IS NOT YOURS, BUT GOD'S.—*Verse 15.*

The text addresses a word—1. To all who are bearing Christian protest against evil. 2. To all who are undergoing severe temptation. 3. To all who are labouring for the good of the world. 4. To all who are engaged in controversy on behalf of Christian doctrine. If we had to defend everything and fight everything in our own strength, and for our own ends, the case would be perfectly different; but when God says to us, "Ye have this treasure in earthen vessels; the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man," when he teaches us that we are servants and not masters, creatures and not creators, with no grasp of eternity, it becomes us patiently to wait, to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord [*Dr. Parker, City Temple*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 5-9. *Invocation of God as—*
 1. *The Ruler of the universe.* 1. Seated in heaven. "God in heaven." 2. Governing all nations. "Rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?" 3. Secure in his dominions. "None is able to withstand thee." II. *The covenant God of Judah.* 1. The friend of Abraham, the nation's founder. "Ahab thy friend for ever" (ver. 7). 2. The guardian of the nation's interests. "Thou didst drive out the inhabitants, &c." 3. The centre of the nation's worship. "A sanctuary therein for thy name." "Jehoshaphat's appeal is threefold—1. 'Art thou not the God omnipotent, and so able to help us?' 2. 'Art thou not our God, who hast given us this land, and so art bound to help us against invaders?' And 3. 'Art thou not the God of this place, the temple, and so bound to help those who pray to thee here?'" [*Speak. Com.*].
 Ver. 7. *Ab. thy friend.* 1. By familiarity in devotion (*cf.* Gen. xviii. 23-33). 2. By promptitude in obedience. 3. By uprightness of life (*cf.* Gen. xvii. 1-22; xxii. 1-18).
 Ver. 17. *Salvation of the Lord.* 1. The deliverance, *salvation.* Reference

always to evil, *i.e.*, dangers in Old Testament, sins under the gospel. 2. Its greatness. "Of the Lord," not by human power. So great "salvation" that every other is nothing; not only from evils, but to privileges. 3. Method of securing it. Stand still. Picture Israel at Red Sea. "Set yourselves" in hope and firm alliance; "stand still," not in your power to do anything; "see," wait in faith, watch God's work for you. Wholly from him, not from you. "In thee, O God, do we put our trust; our souls wait on thee."

Ver. 20. *Believe and be established.* Faith in God's presence, and God's promise, confirms experience in God's mercy, gives courage in conflict, and establishes peace and prosperity. Unbelief brings fear, frustrates God's promise, and turns victory into defeat. Faith in God alone will overcome conflicts in heart and convulsions in the world.

Ver. 21. *Beauty of Holiness.* Rich apparel and ornaments of old, typical of moral character and holy life. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

HOMILETICS.

SONGS BEFORE VICTORY.—Verse 21.

Anybody can sing the "Te Deum" when the battle is over. The difference between an ordinary man-of-war and a Christian is this: a Christian shouts before the victory, because he knows it is sure to come.

I. We learn here, first, a lesson of patriotism. The foreign policy of Ammon and Moab seemed very brilliant for a time. They carried everything before them, but in due time were overthrown. We must not trust in the numbers of our soldiers, in the boundless resources of our country, but in the beauty of holiness, in the justice of our cause, in the purity of our motive; in one word, in the blessing of our God. II. The special object of the lesson is to illustrate the history of the Christian Church, for the Christian Church is engaged in holy war. If we go forth to war we must do as Jehoshaphat; we must be clothed with the spirit of holiness. God came down to fill the hearts of his children; then they were ready for the great work. The Pentecostal blessing delivered the early Christians from the three hindrances to the progress of the Gospel—cowardice, selfishness, and ignorance. Catch the spirit of the Apostles, and you will save the whole world [*H. P. Hughes*].

JEHOSHAPHAT'S CHARACTER AND REIGN.—Verses 31–34.

I. His general uprightness of character. “He walked in the way of Asa, his father,” earnestly and constantly. Regarded God’s approval and will. “doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” A prosperous and successful ruler, his kingdom flourished, and he died in peace. **II. His besetting sins.** Leaned to his own understanding in momentous concerns; put policy before principle, and sowed seeds of evil which lived and fructified long after death. 1. In his *son’s marriage* with Ahab’s daughter. 2. In his *guilty alliances* with kings of Israel. Alliances in war, in commerce. The subtlety of worldly wisdom, and the spurious kindness of worldly liberality interfered with the simplicity of faith in God and love toward man. “As the *dead fly*, though only a little creature, gives *ill-savour* to most costly *ointment*; so even a small degree of *folly* mars a fair *reputation for wisdom and honour*” (Ecc. x. 1).

THE WRECKED FLEET.—Verses 35–37.

I. Notice first the disaster to Jehoshaphat’s shipping. The eastern arm of Red Sea, Gulf of Akabah, is much deeper than the western; a narrow, deep ravine, with steep and rocky sides, the valley of which it forms part stretching far away to the north, till where it holds in its trough the waters of the Dead Sea. Down through the mountain gorge swept the mad hurricane with resistless might, shattering the ships of Jehoshaphat to pieces, and leaving the grey morning to look upon only pitiful wreckage all along the shore. **II. Notice the cause of this disaster.** A judgment from Heaven. The grand mistake and sin of Jehoshaphat lay in associating himself with the enemies of God. This the signal error of his life. If he had been an openly wicked man, a mere man of the world, probably this disaster would not have occurred, but God would not allow one of his own servants to prosper in such an undertaking. **III. The lesson which the disaster teaches is this**—Do not choose your associates amongst those who do not fear the Lord. Always safest to keep under Christian influences. A man is rarely better than the company he keeps. Jehoshaphat may hope to bring Ahaziah up to his own level; but Ahaziah is much more likely to bring Jehoshaphat down. The lesson of the text bears also, and with peculiar point, upon all business alliances. You will do well even to sacrifice a measure of financial interest and worldly prospect rather than be associated in business with a man who is out of all sympathy with you in religion [*J. Thain Davidson*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 20, 21. **I. The march to battle.** With musical strains. In confidence of victory. Under divine command (vers. 26, 27). **II. The joyous return.** In solemn order. In grateful spirit. In triumphant victory.

Vers. 26–30. *The valley of blessing.* Wady Bereikut, two miles west of Tekoa. Jews assembled here after three days’ plunder, to arrange themselves, and return to worship in temple. 1. The place of terrible conflict. 2. Of

awful defeat. 3. Of enthusiastic joy. *Jehoshaphat* means Jehovah judges, hence this valley the type of final conflict and final judgment, in which *Jehovah* will judge and overthrow (cf. Joel iii. 2–12).

Vers. 35–37. *The wrecked fleet.* 1. The cause from God, who reigns over elements of nature and minds of men (Spanish Armada). 2. The design to instruct. Jehoshaphat had formed worldly alliances; could not be weaned

from them, nor see their folly. Disaster predicted (see history), yet refused good advice. Hence must

teach that his blessing rests not upon men and ways which are contrary to his will.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 4. *Seek.* Seek God upon thy way, and he will come to thee [*Schiller*].

Vers. 17, 18. *Stand ye.* Prayer without watching is hypocrisy, and watching without prayer is presumption [*Jay*].

"Teach us in watchfulness and prayer
To wait for the appointed hour;
And fit us by thy grace to share
The triumphs of thy conquering power."

Vers. 35-37. *Gold.* Midas longed for gold, and insulted the Olympians. He got gold, so that whatever he touched became gold, and he with his long ears was little the better for it. Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods; the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears, which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old fables! [*Carlyle*].

CHAPTER XXI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter corresponds with 2 Ki. viii. 16-24; contains Jehoshaphat's family arrangements (vers. 1-4); beginning and character of Jehoram's reign (vers. 5-11); the writing of Elijah to Jehoram (vers. 12-15); the end of Jehoram's reign (vers. 16-20).

Vers. 1-4.—*Family arrangements of J.* Six sons, towards whom he pursued the same policy as Rehoboam (ch. xi. 23). This probably provoked the jealousy of Jehoram and induced him to put them to death. *J. firstborn* (ver. 3), whose natural right to succeed was carried out (Deut. xxi. 15). *Divers*, Jehoram's brothers, supported by some chief men in country; or suspected of disloyalty.

Vers. 5-11.—*Character of J.'s reign.* Ver. 5. *Eight years.* According to 2 Ki. viii. 16, began in fifth year of Joram, K. of Is., therefore in twenty-second year of Jehoshaphat. Four of his eight years coincided nearly with the last four years of his father's reign, and after his father's death he reigned four years [cf. *Murphy*]. Ver. 6. *Daughter*, i.e., the grand-daughter of Omri (2 Ki. viii. 26). Ver. 7. The promise to David and an explanation of God's patience to Jehoram. Ver. 8. *Edom.* Flourishing kingdom of Jehoshaphat dwindling away. Edomites governed since time of David (1 Ki. xxii. 47; 2 Ki. iii. 9) revolted. Defeated in first, they made another attempt, succeeded, and *Libnah*, on south frontier towards Edom, followed example. Ver. 11. *Fornication*, signifying unfaithfulness in following other gods (cf. 2 Ki. ix. 22).

Vers. 12-15.—*Elijah's writing to J.* The document in question is not called a letter (*gagreth* or *sepher*), but a writing (*micetab*), *Words*. The only notice of E. in Chronicles. As prophet of northern kingdom, natural that he should engage but slightly the historian of southern one. Notice one of considerable interest. Shows that E. did not confine attention to affairs of his own state, but looked beyond its borders, to check progress of idolatry in Judah. It proves that the prophet was upon earth after the death of Jehoshaphat (ver. 13), whence it follows (1) that the account of his translation occurs in Kings out of its chronological order, and that (2) Elisha, who prophesied in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Ki. iii. 11-19), commenced his public ministry before his master's translation [*Speak. Com.*]. Some think this was not E. the *Tishbite*, but one distinct from him; others that this should be *Elisha*. Ver. 13. *Way*, extreme measures which dishonoured God; *better*, not idolators, as thou art. Ver. 14. *Plague*, stroke, invasion of Philistines (vers. 16 and 17). Ver. 15. *Disease*, a chronic and incurable dysentery. Ver. 17. *Brake*, i.e.,

“wasted it” (Vulg., *vastaverunt*), applied to cities (*cf.* ch. xxii. 1; Jer. xxix. 2; Ezek. xxx. 16).

Vers. 18–20.—*End of Jehoram's reign.* Cut off by his malady in two years. *No burning,* not honoured by his subjects; *desired,* unregretted. Custom of giving or withholding funeral honours introduced from Egypt into Judæa.

HOMILETICS.

THE SUCCESSION OF JEHORAM.—*Verses* 1–20.

I. The cruelty by which he entered upon his reign. “Slew all his brethren.” In covetousness for their positions, or jealous at their authority. Pretending he was not secure, or under false accusation. Grievous sin to cut off kindred because better than ourselves (*ver.* 13). Fratricide common. Kings filled with “maliciousness, envy, murder” (*Rom.* i. 29).

“Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates the excellence it cannot reach” [*Thomson*].

II. The wickedness which dishonoured his reign. He began wrong and went on to worse. 1. *He walked in idolatrous ways.* “Like as did the house of Ahab” (*ver.* 6). The husband of a wicked woman, he became corrupt, idolatrous, and vile. 2. *He drew his people into the same snare.* He encouraged whoredom in high places. By counsel and example, by force and penalties, “compelled Judah thereto” (*ver.* 11). In a land where the true God resided, the sad spectacle beheld of king and people forsaking his service and giving themselves to excesses and abominations of heathen gods! **III. The calamities to which wickedness exposed his reign.** God forsaken, subjects withdrew allegiance, no defence. 1. *Tributary provinces rebelled.* Edom revolted and made themselves a king (*ver.* 8). Lebnah, a city in his own kingdom, threw off his yoke (*ver.* 10). Arabians encouraged to rebellion (*ver.* 16). Thus, 2. *The kingdom almost politically extinguished.* By destruction of his army, capture of Jerusalem, and plunder of royal palace; by devastation of the country and deportation of royal family (*ver.* 17). Wicked men insecure in business, position, and prospects. “A man shall not be established by wickedness.” **IV. The sad events which terminated his reign through wickedness.** Sins great and retribution grievous, “a great stroke” (*ver.* 14). 1. *Loathsome disease in his person.* 2. *Unregretted in his life.* 3. *Dishonoured in death.* At the early age of 40 smitten with disease, a nuisance to himself and others. The palace turned into a hospital and a tomb. Not loved in life, not lamented in death. Denied a royal sepulchre, and only out of respect allowed interment in the city of David! Sad picture, awful moral!

JEHOSHAPHAT'S FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.—*Verses* 1–4.

I. Prudent in plan. The eldest son appointed to succeed, the others governors of cities and enriched with “gifts of silver and of gold.” This very arrangement might provoke jealousy. Look further than time and higher than worldly prudence. **II. Difficult in execution.** Jehoram not established without struggle; slew his brothers, with princes attached to their interest or ready to avenge their deaths. Thus he disappointed the good intentions of his father, and, like many, founded his kingdom in blood (*Hab.* ii. 12). **III. Frustrated in purpose.** We arrange, others upset. “Things excellently designed,” says Cicero, “have often a very ill event.” Often special trial to leave the fruits of labour, the treasures of home and empire, “unto the man that shall be after us.” Will they be devoted to perpetuate a godly name or desecrated to the world? “And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?” (*Ecc.* ii. 18, 19; *cf.* *Pss.* xlix. 10, xxxix. 6).

THE LAMP OF DAVID'S HOUSE.—Verse 7.

Apostasy would have led to entire extinction of royal family, but for the divine promise to David "to give away a light (candle or lamp) to his children" (2 Ki. viii. 24). **I. How the lamp was kindled.** A divine "gift." All rights from God. None can create a family, build a kingdom without him. "I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed." **II. How the lamp was preserved from extinction.** The same power that lit, kept the light burning. Wickedness of the king, abominations of the people and surrounding darkness of idolatry almost destroyed it. God remembered and fulfilled his promise. "For thou wilt light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" (Ps. xviii. 29). **III. How the lamp will permanently shine.** The dynasty of David the source of light to all generations—raised from degradation and persecution to honour and prosperity. The past a pledge for future. In Christ the light shall shine for ever, can never be darkened nor extinguished. "Unto his (Solomon's) son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a *light* (lamp) *always* before me in Jerusalem?" (1 Ki. xi. 36).

JEHORAM A WARNING HISTORY.

I. In marriage neutralising effect of religious education. Good influences and pious training of early days neutralised. Association with wicked made him an idolator, worldly, and profligate. A wedding-day may be a wrong start and turn the joy of life into mourning. **II. In conduct entailing sufferings upon himself and descendants.** His example pernicious, transmitted poison to successive generations, brought terrible retribution upon himself and his kingdom. Achan "perished not alone in his iniquity." **III. In life a fearful warning to all.** To *parents* not to marry their children for policy or profit; to guard their associations, friendships, and alliances; above all, to set a good example, lest folly in them becomes sin in their offspring. To *young people* to shun evil companions and never forget the claims of truth and God. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 6-11. *The unfaithful king.* Calamities which befel Jehoram appended "because he had forsaken the Lord God of his father." 1. *Seduced by his wife.* Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, a worshipper of Baal. "There needs no more than a bad wife to undo a family" (Bp. Patrick). 2. *Encouraged idolatrous practice.* Established altars in high places; set up groves, images, and pillars, and filled the country with heathen abominations. 3. *Forced the people to follow his example.* "Compelled Judah" (ver. 11). "This was the worse, because in Jerusalem, the holy city; and because he caused them to do it, partly by his

allurements and partly by affrightments, as did Julian also the apostate, *qui persuadendo persecutus est*" [Trapp].

Vers. 12-15. *Elijah's writing.* When written? how sent? for what purpose? Learn the word of God sent to correct, if despised may become our worst enemy. This letter foretold the doom of the king, but unheeded and sad prediction fulfilled. "Why is he not then better believed? If some astrologer had once or twice prognosticated, and it proved true, he should be much carried up and credited. And shall not God's prophets be so? 'Believe the prophets and ye shall prosper.' But many believe them no

otherwise than they do the predictions of an almanack, if so much" [*Trapp*].

Vers. 19, 20. *No burning.* Dishonoured by his subjects. On account of (1) sins he committed, (2) cala-

mities of his reign, (3) humiliating nature of his death. J. died in bloom of manhood, but lived long enough to teach that "he that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity."

CHAPTER XXII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] In this chapter the reign of Ahaziah (vers. 1-6); his end (vers. 7-9); and usurpation of Athaliah (vers. 10-12). Parallel in 2 Ki. viii. 24-29; ix. 27; and xi. 1-3.

Vers. 1-4.—*Succession and beginning of A.* Ah. (called Jehoahaz, xxi. 17) chosen by the people, elder brothers slain by Arabs and could not be ransomed. *Forty and two*, an error of transcription for 22 (2 Ki. viii. 26). for J., his father, not more than 40 at death (xxi. 20); *daughter, i.e.*, grand-daughter of Omri, founder of family (2 Ki. viii. 18-26). Ver. 3. *He also* as well as his father walked, &c. Ver. 4. *They*, Athaliah and Jehoram of Israel, her brother (*cf.* vers. 1, 3, 5).

Vers. 5-9.—*Visit of A. to Jehoram.* This ver. and next have come from a source used also by writer of Kings, and are nearly identical with 2 Ki. viii. 28, 29 [*Speak. Com.*]. War of two kings against Hazael, aggressive to recover Ramoth-Gil., which Ahab and Jehoshaphat had failed to do fourteen years earlier (1 Ki. xxii. 3-36). J. wounded by Syrians withdrew from siege of Jezreel, leaving his army under Jehu within the walls of town. Ahaz. went to visit Joram, and met with death. Ver. 8. *Sons*, princes of royal house, on a visit met with Jehu, and 42 of them slain (2 Ki. x. 14). Ver. 9. *Hide*, about to hide in Samaria, where friends (2 Ki. x. 12-15) were, but turned aside by pursuers, brought to Jehu, was wounded mortally, fled and died at Megiddo. None left of royal house to assume rule.

Vers. 10-12.—*Athaliah's usurpation* (*cf.* 2 Ki. xi. 1-3). *Seed royal*, who aspired to govern. *Bed-chamber*, in a chamber of mattresses, a repository for beds, not a lodging chamber. *Jeh.*, as priest, had a right to occupy buildings in outer wall, and resided in one of these apartments.

HOMILETICS.

AHAZIAH'S WICKED REIGN.—Verses 1-9.

I. Its beginning through home influence. Here all start life in right or wrong direction. Foundations then laid, habits then formed, are permanent factors in future years. To begin life without godly training and virtuous principles will ensure failure, often early and final. Home influence affects societies, churches, and nations. "They that rock the cradle rule the world," said Napoleon. **II. Its continuance by evil counsellors.** A. and her brother counselled A. (ver. 4). Bad training, bad advice. Formed in childhood, directed as a man, how could his reign be otherwise? "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," and the larger the number the greater the safety. To one such Pharaoh owed the security of his kingdom from desolating famine. But "where no counsel is," or only evil counsel, "the people must fall" (Prov. xi. 14). A nation with evil legislators like a ship directed in the midst of rocks in imminent peril. "The counsels of the wicked are deceit."

III. Its end in judgment which it entailed. A. survived to be the ruin of her son, as she had been the bane of her husband (ver. 10). Under her influence he began a career of ungodliness and licentiousness which ended in his destruction. Certain and irretrievable ruin results from wicked counsel and wicked life. "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger."

THE POWER OF A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.—Verse 3.

For is a kind of explanation, the reason assigned for results which are given. "For his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." **I. It begins early in life.** Education begins sooner than parents imagine; long enough before they are responsible; even when they begin to see, feel, and observe. Hence great importance to have first teaching of a child. Early impressions are elementary principles out of which mature life is organised. "When should I begin the education of my children now four years old?" asked a mother from a clergyman, who replied, "Madam, if you have not begun already you have lost those four years. From the first smile that gleams upon an infant's cheek your opportunity begins." **II. It moulds through life.** A living power, forming character and directing conduct. The child becomes a man, the subject becomes a sovereign; influence is thus repeated and transmitted. Home the most powerful school in the world. Mother's influence for good or evil mightier than pulpits and thrones. "My opinion is," said Napoleon, "that the future good or bad conduct of a child depends entirely on the mother." **III. It leaves permanent impress upon life.** Alexander the Great could never correct the faults of gait and manners learned in childhood from Leonidas, his master. The face, words, and example of mothers leave permanent influence. "Every first thing continues for ever with the child; the first colour, the first music, the first flower, paint the foreground of life. Every new educator effects less than his predecessor; until, at last, if we regard all life as an educational institute, a circumnavigator of the world is less influenced by all the nations he has seen than by his nurse" [*Richter*].

"The fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Retains its hold with such unfailling sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day" [*Corper*].

THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH.—Verses 6-9.

I. Untimely in its method. Neither advanced in life, nor delicate in health. On a friendly visit to see a sick relative! Surely this errand of pity the occasion of gladness, not grief? Death everywhere at home and abroad, in our own families and those of friends. From the desk, the pulpit, and the throne we may be suddenly carried to the grave. **II. Brought about by companionship with evil men.** Intimacy with Joram involved him in the common ruin of Ahab's house. "Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou art," is the Spanish proverb; rendered into English, "A man is known by the company he keeps." To be seen with the frivolous is to be known as frivolous; to have friendship with the wise is to enjoy reputation for wisdom; but "a companionship of fools shall be destroyed."

"Heaven with a secret principle endued
Mankind to seek their own similitude."

III. Arranged by the providence of God. "And the destruction of A. was of God by coming to J." (ver. 7). Remarkable that threatened

vengeance was brought on house of Ahab at the very time King of Judah was visiting Joram, that he might partake of punishment as a descendant of wicked Ahab. No evidence that Jehu fixed on this time from wish to include Ahaziah in punishment; nor was he aware of his presence at Jezreel. Unexpected concurrence of circumstances. All result of immutable purpose, and accomplished by a wonderful arrangement of Providence in time and place. May escape for a time, but no concealment from divine retribution.

WOMEN GOOD AND BAD.—*Verses 10–12.*

What a contrast in these verses! Two females acting very different parts. **I. A bad woman engaged in wicked designs.** Athaliah endeavours to destroy seed royal after death of her son. To this wickedness impelled in rage at destruction of Ahab's family, hence David's family must share the same fate; in zeal for idolatry and worship of Baal, which she was determined to uphold amid opposition; in regard to her own defence and in ambitious desire to usurp the throne and transmit the crown to her own family. "Athaliah had inherited the spirit of Jezebel, her mother. As wife of Joram and mother of Ahaziah, she had guided both the internal and the external policy of the Jewish kingdom; she had procured the establishment of the worship of Baal in Judæa (2 Ki. viii. 18–27), and had maintained a close alliance with the sister kingdom. The revolution effected by Jehu touched her nearly. It struck away from her the entire support which she derived from the power and grandeur of her relatives and their readiness to help her at need. It isolated her religious system, severing the communication with Phœnicia. Moreover, the death of Ahaziah deprived her of her legal status in Judæa, which was that of *Gebirah*, or queen-mother, and transferred that position to the chief wife of her deceased son. Under these circumstances, which might well have daunted even a woman of more than ordinary courage, Athaliah's hereditary spirit and energy asserted itself. Instead of yielding to the storm, or merely standing on the defensive, she resolved to become the assailant, and, before any plans could be formed against her, to strike" [*Speak. Com.*]. **II. A good woman engaged in benevolent designs.** The family of David not entirely destroyed. J., daughter of Joram (not of Athaliah, *Josephus*), wife of Jehoiada, the high priest, took Joash, her nephew, to conceal and save him (ver. 11). The lineage of David and the human descent of Messiah suspended on the life of a child one year old! This loyal act a benevolent work, the means of fulfilling prophetic words and blessing the world! Women may be devils or ministering angels. "If once she falls, it is the fall of Lucifer" [*Colton*]. But "in great crises it is woman's special lot to soften our misfortunes" [*Napoleon*].

"Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming, as is meet and fit,
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each" [*Tennyson*].

CHAPTER XXIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter parallel with 2 Ki. xi. 4-20, evidently from same source, although presenting certain points of difference. In Ki. narrative related from civil point of view, in Chronicles writer concerns himself mainly with the ecclesiastical aspect of the transaction [*Speak. Com.*]. Joash is made king (vers. 1-11); Athaliah slain (vers. 12-15); and worship restored (vers. 16-21).

Vers. 1-11.—*Joash made King.* *J. strengthened*, braced himself to the effort from which he had previously shrunk [*Speak. Com.*]. *Captains*, centurions of royal guards loyal to legitimate heir of crown. *Covenant* for overthrow of Athaliah's tyranny. Ver. 2. *Gathered*, probably at time of festivals, to disarm suspicion. *Israel*, i.e., Judah. Ver. 3. *Congregation*, select Levites and trusty persons, collected by captains from various cities. *Said*, Jehoiada said, pointing to Joash. *Lord* (2 Sam. viii. 12, 13). Ver. 4. *Ye*. Levites received orders, in Ki. orders to royal guard given. *Entering*, Levites released each other every Sabbath day (1 Chron. ix. 25). *Porters*, watchmen. *Doors*, Hebrew thresholds. Ver. 5. *Courts*. *people* not admitted ordinarily, on this occasion allowed to witness proceedings. Remember Athaliah had completely desecrated the entire enclosure [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 6. *Watch*, see that no worshippers of Baal forced their way in. Ver. 7. *Compass*, Levites not engaged as indicated to surround king at entrance and exit. Ver. 8. *Dismissed*, not to keep a sufficient force for the occasion; armed them within temple courts to avoid suspicion (ver. 9), and equipped "all the people," i.e., combined princes, guards, and Levites, who surrounded the king. Ver. 11. *Testimony*. The law according to which he was to rule (Deut. xvii. 18).

Vers. 12-15.—*Athaliah is slain*. She is permitted to enter outer court without a guard. Ver. 13. *Pillar*, platform on which king elevated to be seen. *Treason*, conspiracy. She was taken out of temple grounds to *horse gate* (for king's mules), and there slain (2 Ki. xi. 16-18; xxiii. 2, 6, 12).

Vers. 16-21.—*Jehoiada's reforms*. J. represented the Lord (2 Ki. xi. 17); ratified the covenant to be the Lord's people (ver. 16); destroyed temple of Baal (ver. 17); and arranged for restoration of priests and Levites, singers and porters. Ver. 20. *Brought down*, escorted king to palace, through *high gate*, chief gate of outer court (gate of guard, 2 Ki. xi. 19). *Quiet*, a bloodless revolution (except Athaliah's death) and free from tyranny and idolatry.

HOMILETICS.

JOASH MADE KING.—Verses 1-11.

Six years of Athaliah's tyranny had ripened the people for revolution. They were weary and ready for change. Agents and managers at hand, and the revolution was successful. **I. The measures adopted.** "Every step was taken in accordance with the usages which had been gradually gaining head during the previous reigns, and all the means which his office placed at the disposal of Jehoiada were freely employed" [Stanley]. 1. *He concerted with the leaders of the army.* Indirect communication with the five officers of loyal guard, whom he bound by solemn oath. 2. *He enlisted the co-operation of the Levites.* These divided into three bands: one to guard the king, the other two posted at doors and gates. Captains and military officers entered the temple unarmed to lull suspicion, and furnished with sacred armoury. All courts of temple filled with those favourable to the cause, and secret kept wonderfully. "The words of the wise are heard in quiet" (Eccles. ix. 17). **II. The leading man to arrange them.** Jehoiada chief in this conspiracy. A man of prudence, piety, and commanding position. United by marriage with the royal family, he sought to overturn the usurper, and restore lawful sovereignty. As high priest it was his duty officially to watch over the temple and execute the laws of God. In his signal services to God, his king, and country he was

supported by chief authorities civil and religious, counselled by the prophets of his time, and directed by divine guidance. He earned a foremost name in Israel, and was buried with honour in the city of David. **III. The time in which the measures were carried out.** Success depends upon time, the exact moment as well as method. The Sabbath was the day fixed. Needful to have as large a force as possible. Those detained who under other circumstances would have gone home. But the excitement of the moment did not make J. forget the sanctity of God's house. None but priests and ministering Levites permitted to enter, and strict orders given to take Athaliah out of its precincts. **IV. The success which attended the execution of the measures.** At the given signal the king was exhibited and crowned. Bystanders clapped hands together and raised the national shout, "Long live the king." Trumpeters announced the royal inauguration. Athaliah entered the temple, saw the fatal hour was come, rent her royal robes, and cried out, "Conspiracy, conspiracy!" but the temple was kept from pollution; the throne of David was preserved, and the worship of God restored. A revolution carried out with tact, unanimity, and with little bloodshed. "All the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet."

THE REFORMS OF JEHOIADA.—Verses 15–21.

Only part of work done by overthrow of tyranny and death of Athaliah, to complete revolution government must be settled and interests of religion secured. **I. The national covenant was renewed.** A covenant with Israel "to be unto him a people for inheritance" (Deut. iv. 6; xxvii. 9; Ex. xix.). A threefold covenant by which the king bound himself to rule according to divine rule, and the people pledged themselves to be loyal to him as God's representative—by which the king and people agreed to "be the Lord's people." Sensible of obligation to God, we are bound closer to one another. Men first give themselves to the Lord and then to us (2 Cor. viii. 5). Starting in this spirit they are more likely to prosper in families, churches, and kingdoms. **II. The idolatry of Baal was destroyed.** This immediate fruit of the renewal of covenant. Baal's temples, altars, and images shattered to pieces by popular fury. Beside the altar fell the priest of Baal, for God commanded that seducers to idolatry should be put to death (Deut. xiii. 5, 6). Sins must be forsaken and overcome; every usurper in heart and life dethroned, and God's reign supreme over all. **III. The worship of Jehovah was restored.** Priests were appointed to their courses, and sacrifices duly offered. Singers and porters arranged according to former custom. Praise and thanksgiving filled the courts of God's house, and worship restored in its ancient purity. **IV. The throne of Judah was established.** The young king wonderfully preserved, was brought down from the temple to the palace, seated on the throne—"the throne of the kings of Judah" (2 Kings xi. 19)—and crowned as lawful sovereign. "Through the priesthood the lineage of David had been saved and the worship of Jehovah restored in Judah, even more successfully than it had been in Samaria through the prophets" [*Stanley*]. **V. The priesthood was elevated to highest honour.** "During minority of Joash, Jehoiada virtually reigned. The very office in some sense created by him. He raised the priesthood to an importance which (with single exception of Eli) it had never before attained in history of the Jewish nation, and which it never afterwards altogether lost. The name of 'High Priest,' which had not been given to Aaron, or Eli, or Zadok, was given to him, and afterwards continued to his successors. He was regarded as a second founder of the order, so that in after days he, rather than Aaron, is described as the chief" [*Stanley*].

TEMPLE WORSHIP RESTORED AND ESTABLISHED.—Verses 15–21.

Reparation of this venerable fabric first object, and one of the great events of his reign. From Joash seemed to come the impulse, "Joash was minded to restore the house of the Lord." It had suffered from neglect, been spoiled of its treasures, and only a faded remnant of former splendour. **I. In its structure and worship.** Its outward form, its foundations had been injured, "broken up" (ch. xxiv. 7) by Athaliah's workmen taking away stones for her own temple. Priests had not taken care to repair the breaches, but the king zealous. Sad to see ministers dilatory in sacred duties, professors with mere form becoming careless and hypocritical! *Spiritually* its worship was restored in purity and attraction. Officers appointed for departments, lawful sacrifices offered, and true service revived. **II. In its method of support.** An account of measures adopted (2 Kings xii.). Three sorts of money levied—redemption money, estimation money, and freewill offerings. This method seemed to have failed for some reason, and the plan adopted in chapter xxiv. (*cf.* outline). **III. In its principles and design.** Its purpose to remind of God and his claims, to afford the privilege of meeting and praising God. In teaching it set moral before ritual, intoned the minds of kings, the lives of the people, and the traditions of the nation. From God came restoration from danger, elevation to honour, and prosperity to all ranks. Hence needful to have a fixed place to cultivate reverence and social fellowship; to embody order and devotional life. Common worship is the necessity of our nature and the command of Scripture; the indestructive principle of Sabbath law and temple ritual. The recognition of God—the formal recognition of him by the people as Ruler, Saviour, and Portion—is the germinal moral principle of duty and religion.

"One place there is—beneath the burial soil,
Where all mankind are equalised by death;
Another place there is—the fane of God,
Where all are equal who draw living breath."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 10–13. *Joash made King.* 1. Presented in the temple. 2. Crowned with the diadem and testimony. "It is the first direct example of a *coronation*. The diadem, probably a band studded with jewels, was placed on his head by the high priest, and upon it the sacred 'testimony,' which, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, had been raised into new importance. It seemed like the intimation of a limitation to the king's despotic power—an indication that he was not to be, like David, above, but beneath the law of his country" [*Sturley*]. 3. Anointed with sacred oil. According to Hebrew text, 2 Ki. xi. 12, by people; to LXX. (of same), by Jehoiada; to 2 Chr. xxiii. 11, by Jehoiada and his sons. 4. Accepted by the nation. Trumpets and shouting, "God save, lit. Long live the king"

(ver. 11). A form used among Continental nations, as the French "Vive le Roi." "Our own form of loyal acclamation comes from the ritual of daily responses and of the ancient coronation service, 'Domine, salvum fac Regem,' which is taken from Ps. xix. 9, as in Sept. and Vulgate Versions. Coverdale translation (1537) gives 'God save the new kyng'; Geneva (1560) 'God save the kyng.' The Authorised Versions of 1539 and 1572 had 'God send the kyng life'" [*J. H. Blunt*].

Ver. 11. *The crown and the testimony.* Two important symbols. The crown the sign of power, and the law the sign of theocratic wisdom. "Finely are both the crown and the book presented to the king, that he might be not only mighty, but also wise, or (as

we may say) know God's word and right. Thus even now we make kings with a sword and book" [*Luther*].

Vers. 12-15. *Death of Athaliah*. 1. By secret plot. 2. By agency of high priest. 3. By co-operation of the people. 4. As a righteous judgment. "This woman ruled viciously, selfishly, without regard to patriotic instinct or

patriotic right, and having filled the cup of her iniquity, the people arose, and Athaliah was slain with the sword" [*Parker*]. Athaliah might well have written, as Mary Queen of Scots did in a window at Fotheringay Castle:—

"From the top of all my trust
Mishap hath laid me in the dust" [*Trapp*].

CHAPTER XXIV

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter parallel with 2 Ki. xii; gives same order of events with fresh matter and in different style. Joash's interest in religion under guidance of Jehoiada (vers. 1-14); forsakes the God of his fathers after death of Jehoiada (vers. 15-22); distressed by Syrians and put to death by his servants (vers. 23-27).

Vers. 1-14.—*Zeal of Joash under influence of Jehoiada*. *Days*, Jehoiada lived after accession of Joash twenty-three years (2 Ki. xii. 6). Idolatry of king confined to last ten or fifteen years. Ver. 3. *Two wives*, anxious to secure succession to throne, and limit licence which kings permitted themselves (1 Ki. xi. 3; 2 Chr. xi. 21; xiii. 21). Ver. 4. *Repair*, renew, strengthen. Levites hastened not, through limited funds or indifference (ver. 5). Ver. 6. *Collection*, tax assigned by law for tabernacle; half a shekel from every one (Ex. xxx. 12-16; xxxviii. 25). Ver. 7. *Sons*, Ahaziah and elder brothers (xxi. 17), devoted to idolatry, and who carried out their mother's designs against temple. Ver. 8. *Chest*, full particulars 2 Ki. xii. 9. Ver. 9. *Collection*, contributions flowed in after proclamation. Ver. 10. *End*, until enough to complete restoration. Ver. 12. *Did work*, overseers of work (2 Ki. xii. 11). Ver. 13. *Perfected*, lit. the healing (binding, cf. Neh. iv. 1; Jer. xxx. 17) went up (was laid, Jer. viii. 22). *State*, lit. on its measure, original proportions Ex. xxx. 32. Ver. 14. To minister, refurbishing temple with utensils, &c.

Vers. 15-22.—*Joash declines after the death of Jehoiada*. This paragraph not in Kings. *Full of days*, not applied to many. Years unparalleled from Exodus downwards. Many dispute this age, others see no reason to do so. Ver. 17. *Obeisance*, flattered the king, requested toleration for idolatry. *Hearkened*, yielded to them. Ver. 19. *Prophets*, names not mentioned, except Zech., who warned of danger. Ver. 20. *Spirit came clothed*. Ver. 21. *Conspired*, they would inflame the king, urge him to extreme measures. *Stones*, the punishment for idolators (Lev. xx. 2). *Court*, between temple and altar (Mt. xxiii. 35). Ver. 22. *Said*, dying words of Zech. utterance of prophetic doom.

Vers. 23-27.—*Syrian invasion and death of J*. *End*, turn of the year; time of such expeditions. *Came*, led by Hazael, whom Joash bribed to withdraw from siege (2 Ki. xii. 18). *Destroyed*, a mere handful of men inflicted humiliating defeat upon collected force of Israel (ver. 24). Ver. 25. *Departed*, pressed on against Jerusalem after defeat of Joash's army, but retreated because enriched by gold of temple (2 Ki. xii. 18). *Diseases*, plural of intensity, sore distress. *Bed*, where he lay sick. Ver. 26. *Zabad*, Zachar perhaps originally, as letters are of like form; in Kings, Jozachar. *Shim.*, Ki. Shomer. Mothers only given. Ver. 27. *Burdens*, according to common usage in prophetic writings (2 Ki. ix. 25; Is. xiii. 1; Lam. ii. 14) are denunciations of coming evils [*Keil*] (ver. 19). *Story* (marg.), commentary, the memoir contained in state annals.

HOMILETICS.

REGARD FOR GOD'S HOUSE.—Verses 4-14.

Remarkable that first movement should come from the king and not the priest to restore temple. Jehoiada had permitted it to remain unrepaired during the

whole period of his regency. Now Joash, not regardless of the place which had given him shelter, displays zeal. **I. In repairing its physical structure.** "Mindful to *repair* (renew) the house," which was in decay. No right to permit dilapidations in God's house than in private property. We should keep it in repair, make it attractive and durable outside as well as inside. Many more concerned for their own than for God's house; build and adorn for themselves, but neglect God. "Is it time for you, O you, to dwell (at ease) in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" (Hag. i. 4). **II. In urging others to interest themselves in this work.** J. consulted officers, advised them to collect expenses from the cities, reproved the high priest, and urged all to diligence. "See that ye hasten the matter" (ver. 5). Too long had they been negligent. The honour of God and the interests of the nation demanded exertion. Shamefully remiss are many who ought to be awake and first. Let us be alive ourselves, and excite others to the work. "Nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour," says South. **III. In creating a fund to keep it in repair.** 1. *A tax was levied upon the people* (ver. 5). Priests ordered to collect the three kinds of money (*cf.* 2 Ki. xii.), but were careless, and did not call upon the people, or people had little confidence in management of priests that they were reluctant to pay dues. What money was collected not applied to proper use. "The breeches of the house were not repaired." 2. *A freewill offering box was provided.* The general levy failed. A chest made, hole bored into lid, and placed at door to receive voluntary offerings of people. A separation thus made between money for repairs, "incidentals," and money for support of priests. This novel, touched the hearts of the people. Cheerfulness and sufficiency the result (ver. 11). Need of reform in management of Church finances. Great deficiency in serious consideration, conscientious liberality, enlightened system and Christian patriotism. **IV. In the lawful use of the fund thus created.** Formerly money sadly misappropriated. 1. *Duly audited by proper persons.* The Levites took the box to "the king's scribe, and the high priest's officer came and emptied it," counted it, put it into bags, labelled and sealed as customary, and delivered them to overseers of building to pay workmen and buy necessary materials. 2. *Thus nothing misappropriated.* Nothing lost. Confidence in financial business. No account exacted, overseers honest, and surplus, after repairs, appropriated to purchase of temple furniture (ver. 14). This a type of apostolic method, an example to the Christian Church. **V. In the completion of the work begun.** Many hindrances. Prevalence of idolatrous customs, official dilatoriness, failure of first plan, and lethargy of people. But work went on, priests ashamed, and consented to measures adopted. All difficulties finally overcome. "The work was *perfected* (healed), restored to beauty, *set* in its measure and proportion, and *strengthened* in durability and structure" (ver. 13).

The foregoing outline may suggest other thoughts. **I. It is natural for the believing heart to regard the house of God.** Its interests ever dear to the Christian. To him the temple is the house of bread—his Bethlehem; the centre of attraction, fellowship, and joy. It is instinctive for him to mind it, as it is natural for the hart to pant after the waterbrook, or doves to fly to their windows. **II. When men pay due regard to God's house, they will provide for its interests.** They build, and keep the fabric in repair; provide for sustenance of its agencies, and perpetuation of its worship; always and everywhere revere the place in which God is publicly worshipped. **III. In thus providing for the interests of God's house, they promote the welfare of the nation.** Both intimately connected. Associations of worship affect the education, culture, and morals of

the community. Public worship is the secret power of the Church, the nurse of virtue in the nation.

NATIONAL RELAPSE INTO IDOLATRY.—*Verses 17-24.*

A great change after death of Jehoiada. Many took part in revolution which dethroned Athaliah and placed Joash on the throne, on political not religious grounds. Dislike to rule of a woman, a foreigner, without zeal for pure religion, hence relapse. **I. Beginning with the demands of the princes.** "The princes of Judah" came to king (ver. 17). Worldly-minded, hating priestly power, and tired with thirty years' pure and simple worship, yearned for seductive rites of heathenism. They requested permission to worship in high places, not to be put to expensive and frequent journeys to Jerusalem. Advised the king to be more tolerant and less under priestly dominion. By unusual humility, framed a plausible and inoffensive petition, which was granted. **II. Encouraged by the concessions of the king.** Flattered by their "obeisance to the king," he hearkened to them. Pleased and weak-minded, their requests were more agreeable than the dictates of Jehoiada used to be. Princes often flattered and drawn into ruin by those who promised liberty. George III., after his accession, reproved a high dignitary for fulsome adulation, and issued an order prohibiting any clergyman called to preach before him from paying compliments to him. **III. Protested against by the warnings of the prophet.** Z., son of J., urged people from a prominent place not to transgress the commandments of the Lord. This would never prosper, but bring national disaster. Prompted by irresistible influence, he boldly protested against prevailing tendencies. But denunciations unpalatable to the king, roused fierce passions of multitude, and a band of miscreants, instigated by Joash, put him to death (*cf.* Mt. xxiii. 35). But the death of the prophet not the destruction of his message. **IV. Punished in awful judgments upon the nation.** The dying words, a prophetic doom of Z., fulfilled at end of the year. Syrians invaded the land, princes of people destroyed, and immense spoil sent to Damascus. How suggestive the words, "a *small* company of men" overcame "a *very great* host"! To men who estimate everything by great numbers and dazzling splendour, this would be a striking calamity. "Wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass."

THE DEATH OF JOASH.—*Verses 25-27.*

I. An end embittered by painful malady. "They left him in great diseases," which long confined him in bed. Plural of intensity, a severe malady. Charles IX. of France, author of Parisian massacre, died in great distress. Kingly dignity wards not off loathsome disease. **II. An end brought about by conspiracy.** Not even permitted to die peaceably in his own bed. Perhaps in hope of recovery or escape, his own servants conspired against him. A punishment degrading, depriving death of mitigations and friendships. **III. An end considered as divine judgment.** God smites wicked men in everything; end of one trouble beginning of another. The winds of divine judgments rise from every quarter, bend and break, and no escape from tempest. J. plagued with the Syrians and smitten with terrible disease, met with untimely death, and refused official honour in burial. The memory of the wicked doomed to perish. "Let him not be written with the righteous."

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOASH.

The beginning well in outward actions and national government. But evident from the history that the rectitude of administration was owing to his preserver and tutor, not to his enlightened principles and sincere convictions.

I. The instability of his religion. 1. He was zealous for God under restraint. "Was minded to repair the house," in excitement and prosperity, but zeal died out. "When the sun went down the reflected brightness went with it." 2. He degenerated when that restraint was taken away. He depended upon wise counsel and piety of Jehoiada; when prop removed he fell. Had no root in himself, and left to his own resources, could not stand. Circumstances not principles made him what he was. When these changed he changed. His religion was temporary and superficial. He only "did right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (ver. 2). **II. The honour and disgrace of his reign.** A mixed reign, marked with singular honour and stained with remarkable disgrace. 1. Honourable reforms. He rebuilt and restored temple. Established its order and worship, and thus removed national scandal. He reprov'd officers in their languid work, adopted efficient means to finish it, and at length the temple stood in grandeur and dignity in which it was left by ancestors, the glory of his own reign and administration of Jehoiada. 2. Disgraceful crimes. Like Nero, after death of his teacher Seneca, the philosopher, he was stained with crimes. He not only made shipwreck of faith, but in a period of ten years, the restorer of the temple became an idolator; the ward of Jehoiada was the murderer of his son. A reign under excellent guardians (like many in the middle ages and modern times, German Emperors Otto III. and Henry IV., in many respects Louis XIV. of France) at first, ended in humiliation and war. The memory of a king hopeful in beginnings stands marked with blood and the ways of Cain. **III. The disastrous end of his life.** Complicated in deeds of violence. Horrid outrage on a prophet of God—base ingratitude to a family who had preserved his life—atrocious treatment of a true Hebrew prophet—illegal exercise of power and authority as king—some of his acts. Invasion and defeat, severe disease, and smitten while languishing on his bed, by his own servants. "But they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings." The murderer of the son not permitted to sleep with that father whose memory he outrageously dishonoured. From this review learn—1. The responsibility of those to whom care of young persons is entrusted. 2. Caution those yet under guardianship of friends and tutors. 3. The awful end of those who turn aside from hopeful beginnings.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. *Under minority of Joash.*
1. The king well trained and prepared for duty. 2. High priesthood increased in dignity. "Name 'High Priest' not given to Aaron, Eli, or Zadok, given to him and his successors; regarded as second founder, and in after days described as chief" [Stanley]. 3. Morality lax. National religion mixed with worship "in high places." Temple neglected, and money misappropriated.

Vers. 8-11. *The alms chest.* "It is a curiously circumstantial record of a church restoration fund belonging to a period 2,730 years distant from our own time, and perhaps in the lifetime of Homer" [Blunt].

Vers. 15, 16. *Jehoiada.* As guardian-priest and patriot. Honoured in age, burial, and reputation, yet lacking in zeal and energy. Melancthon orthodox and learned, but accomplished no great reformation. Luther inferior in some

respects, a man for his times and work, bold and zealous, and, under God, effected deliverance from Popery, and the Reformation.

Vers. 18-23. *Murder of Zechariah.*

1. Horrid outrage on a prophet of the Lord. A sacred person, a Hebrew patriot. 2. An instance of base ingratitude. To a family who had preserved his life. 3. A deed of violence involving great criminality. Illegal and unjust exercise of power, bringing retribution upon king and nation. The last words, "*The Lord require it,*" not vindictive (then a great contrast to those of Stephen, Acts vii. 60), but a prophetic warning to Jews (Mt. xxiii. 35) in time of Jesus and to us. "The act produced a profound impression. It was a later Jewish tradition, but one which marks the popular feeling, that

this crowning crime of the House of Judah took place on the Sabbath day, on the great Day of Atonement, and that its marks were never to be effaced. The sacredness of the person and of the place, the concurrent guilt of the whole nation—king, nobles, and people—the ingratitude of the chief instigator, the culmination of long tragedy of the House of Omri, the position which the story held in the Jewish canon, as the last great murder of the last Book of the Old Testament, all conspired to give it the peculiar significance with which it is recorded in the Gospels as closing the catalogue of unrighteous deaths, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah . . . who was slain between the temple and the altar" [Stanley].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 5. *Hasten.* "That I may be of the number of those that spend themselves with labour, and not of those who waste in rust and laziness. Lord! let me rather wear out in the work, than consume (like a garment laid by with moths) for want of use" [Swinnock's "Christian Man's Calling"]. "I like to be at my post, doing my duty; indifferent whether one set or another govern, provided they govern well" [Sir J. Moore].

Vers. 11, 12. *Money.* We see here a distinct indication of a practice still followed in the East where large sums of money are concerned, as in the disbursements of the Government, and in the taxes and tributes paid to the Crown. The money in such cases is deposited in long narrow bags, each containing a certain sum, and carefully sealed with the official seal [Kitto]. In East in present time a bag of money passes (for some time at least) currently from hand to hand, under the authority

of a banker's seal, without any examination of its contents [Burder].

Ver. 18. *Left the house of the Lord.* A man's conception of worship really reaches his life. Let him lose his reverence for the Bible, for God, for man, however much he may boast of it, will in that measure go down. The victory of the enemy will be easy and complete. It cannot be a fatal offence, it may be thought, to neglect the assembly of ourselves together at least occasionally, to regard other occasions of coming together as of equal importance with meetings in the Church. It cannot be wrong surely to elevate certain kinds of intellectual inquiry into a species of worship on the Lord's day; all these thoughts are most insidious, full of temptation, and when perverted, it is in innumerable cases not the lower that is lifted up, but the higher that is degraded or impoverished [Dr. Parker].

CHAPTER XXV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] We have succession of A. (vers. 1-4), his expedition against Moab (5-13), his idolatry (14-16), his war with Joash (17-24), and his death and burial (25-28). Parallel 2 Ki. xiv. 1-20.

Vers. 1-4.—*A's succession* (cf. 2 Ki. xiv. 2-6). *Perfect*, single heart; not like ancestor David, but like Joash, father. Ver. 3. *Slew*, executed justice; an instance of right-doing. Ver. 4. *Not*, as Deut. xxiv. 16. Families of traitors often destroyed.

Vers. 5-13.—*Expedition against Moab*. Ver. 5. Old method of organisation by families (Num. ii. 34), under captains of hundreds, &c. *Hired*, paid for others, his own army too reduced to protect country. Ver. 8. *If, &c.*, some suppose *not* dropped out, and would read, "Go alone, and God will *not* make thee fall." Generally thought to be ironical. "Go (if thou wilt be self-willed) thou, act, be strong, it will be of no avail." Ver. 10. *Anger*, caused through sudden and apparently unreasonable dismissal. Ver. 11. *Salt*, South of Dead Sea, where dwelt Scirites, associated with Edom (Gen. xxxvi. 18). Ver. 12. *Rock*, unto the height of Selah. "Battle probably fought not far from Selah (Petra); the captains marched to Petra itself, and precipitated from the steep cliffs in its neighbourhood" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 13. *Soldiers*, mercenaries sent by Joash to ravage Jewish cities from Sam. to Beth., in revenge for considered insult.

Vers. 14-16.—*A's idolatry*. Not in Kings. *Gods*, common practice to carry gods of conquered places as trophies of victory, not generally to be worshipped. Ver. 16. *Talked*, prophets entitled to counsel kings. *Art thou, &c.?* lit., "Have we made thee a king's counsellor?" *Forbare*, ceased remonstrance, asserted his right, and consequences of disobedience.

Vers. 17-24.—*A's war with Joash* (cf. 2 Ki. xiv. 8-14). *Advice*, counsel not from God. *Face*, a challenge to combat (2 Sam. ii. 13). Ver. 18. *Thistle*. Parabolic forms employed in East to carry unwelcome truths, or express contemptuous sneers. This designed here. A *thistle*, low shrub; represents A. a petty prince; *cedar*, the potentate of Israel. The wild beast, the overwhelming army of Israel, would destroy the strength of Judah. The moral of fable in ver. 19. Ver. 20. *Not*, sarcastic tone incited more. Asa in a judicial state of blindness. *From God*, characteristic of the author. Joash overcame A., plundered palace and temple, and took hostages to prevent further war.

Vers. 25-28.—*A's end*. *Turn away*, apostasy followed by maladministration. King lost respect, fled to *Lachish*, frontier town of Philistines, there traced and murdered. Body brought without pomp in a chariot to Jerusalem, and interred among ancestors.

HOMILETICS.

AMAZIAH'S BEGINNING.—Verses 1-4.

Son and successor of Joash, ninth king on throne of Judah; 25 years old at accession, reigned 29 years, B.C. 837-808 (2 Ki. xiv. 1, 2). **I. In ordinary circumstances of succession.** A privilege to inherit a crown, great natural rights and positions. Better to become kings and priests, aristocracy of God, to rule over the hearts and affections of men, than on thrones of empires. **II. With considerable zeal for Jehovah.** Did right, "but not with a perfect heart," not like David his father. Half-hearted, zealous for God, but "high places not taken away." Obeying God and making sacrifices, but honouring the idols of Edom. Double-minded, his good beginning as that of Joash unlike his later conduct. **III. By an act of justice and mercy.** Punished traitors who murdered his father, as an act of justice; but was moderate. "With a mercy shown apparently for the first time in Hebrew annals, their children were spared" [*Stanley*]. Generally families of traitors

were destroyed. This act, therefore, had regard for law of God more than customs of nations ; displayed kindly feeling, and became a king.

“ No ceremony that to great ones longs—
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does ” [*Shakes.*].

EXPEDITION AGAINST EDMOM.—Verses 5-24.

This chief event in reign, an attempt to impose upon Edomites the yoke cast off in time of Jehoram (2 Ki. viii. 20 ; 1 Ki. xxii. 48). **I. An expedition ambitious in design.** Might be *natural* and prudent to assemble army, class according to respective families, and appoint officers from among brethren, that all might be an army of brothers, relatives, and friends. Might be *patriotic* to reduce insurgents to former subjection. But A. the slave of reckless ambition ; adventurous, fond of conquest and military renown, prone to “ meddle to his hurt.” Real wisdom to cultivate peace, develop internal resources of kingdom ; real “ strength to sit still ” at home.

“ Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other side.”

II. An expedition in which alien forces were hired for the accomplishment of the design. Edom strong. A. considered his 300,000 troops unequal, hired 160,000 men from Israel, and sets first example of employing mercenary forces. Such help useless, dangerous, and opposed to God's will. He should go alone, in dependence upon God, “ who hath power to help and to cast down.” Any other plan would displease God and result in defeat. With God's presence our own resources sufficient ; without, numbers only ruin, and “ make thee fall before the enemy.” **III. An expedition the success of which was turned into a curse.** A. heeded not prophet, went, conquered, and captured cities. 1. *In the cruelty exercised.* Savage cruelty dealt out in revenge for barbarities inflicted on Hebrews, or to strike terror into a rebellious people. “ Man's inhumanity to man.” 2. *In the spirit which it begot.* Not a spirit of gratitude and caution. Flattered probably by those from whom he “ took advice ” (ver. 17), he became proud and presumptuous. Burning with revenge for Israel's insult, not satisfied without defiant challenge, he undertakes aggressive war. The fruits of victory misappropriated. Unsanctified successes often turned into curses.

DUTY AND SELF-INTEREST.—Verse 9.

A. made every preparation for expedition, ready to start, but suddenly “ there came a man of God ” and forbids. But what must he do for the money ? Lose it and go to war in right way. Learn—**I. That we often invest our resources without prudence or security.** Money, friends, position, and life pledged for wrong purposes. Enterprises without divine guidance, gifts used sinfully. Men morally going astray, poor and insecure, though strong and sufficient in their own estimation. The “ man of God,” the ministry of the word ever meets in the ways of life, condemning our treaties and alliances, reproving our plans and investments, and calling us back to God. **II. That we are often called upon to sacrifice our resources thus invested.** Reluctant to give up besetting sins, worldly pleasure, and to forsake evil ways. Often much at stake in worldly friendships, Sunday trading, and unlawful compacts. “ What must we do with our money risked upon it ? ”

“Why forfeit the deposit?” But why strike the bargain if wrong? Why make the deposit without prudence and security, &c.? The answer to all questions, God demands. Before divine authority objections ridiculous. In divine promise compensation for any loss. “The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.” **III. That when called to duty obedience guarantees success and brings abundant reward.** Impossible to induce obedience without offer of superior good. Motive power needful. Think not that nature or some law of mind breaks the chains of desire confirmed by habit and long years of life! Calculate not too confidently on moral powers wasted in sinful pursuits! It is never easy for a selfish man to renounce himself even with help of gospel! But God imparts disposition and strength. In sin “the first loss is the best.” In duty we find compensation and gain. “The Lord is able to give thee much more than this”—abundant reward for leaving all and following him. “Manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

AMAZIAH'S FALL INTO IDOLATRY.—*Verses 14–16.*

A. took the gods of Edom as tokens of victory, but deserted God who gave victory, and worshipped the idols he captured, like the Romans subduing nations and paying tribute to their gods. **I. Idolatry most gratuitous.** This not asked of him. Probably he sought to disarm spite of Edomites for harsh treatment, or attracted by pomp and splendour of worship of idols. Idolatry, sin fascinates unholy men. But what humility and disgrace voluntarily and slavishly to bow down! **II. Idolatry most unreasonable.** The gods could neither protect themselves nor worshippers, senseless and most absurd to lean upon them or put them in place of Jehovah! The sinner, a criminal and a fool, can give no reason for his choice. “Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, &c.?” **III. Idolatry most dangerous.** It estranges further from God, confirms self-will, and binds us faster to the false and debasing. It brings down rebuke from God, and leads to destruction. “Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah.”

THE DANGERS OF SUCCESS AND AMBITION.—*Verses 17–28.*

Dangerous to succeed without God. Amaziah's false step at beginning, and the spirit in which it was originated turned the end into misfortune. **I. Success begetting pride and ambition.** The victory of Edom made A. proud; its issue unblest; kindled boldness and a spirit of revenge. He glories in strength. Success led him on to fresh undertakings which involved defeat. “Pride cometh before destruction, &c.” **II. Pride leading into presumption.** Thought himself more than a match for King of Israel. He cannot sit still, must punish him for wrong-doing, and sends the challenge, “Come, let us look one another in the face.” The bitter and contemptuous language of the parable only enraged him to repeat the challenge. Nothing checks. “He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied.” **III. Presumption ending in destruction.** Exultation often the prelude to downfall, downfall more dismal and complete on account of previous eminence. Prosperity of fools destroys them. 1. *Warning unheeded.* Edom conquered. Be content. Stay at home. Why meddle to thy hurt? 2. *Blinded by self-security.* He could not be defeated, could see no danger, and knew not that God had forsaken him. 3. *Miserable failure.* Joash surprised him before ready for war; defeated him in a pitched battle; routed his army, and took him prisoner. The disasters of

his conduct created opposition and conspiracy, and he was slain. No real, permanent success to ungodly man. If no reverses in life, death makes him a wreck. His honours and achievements buried in the dust, and he stands naked in the presence of God!

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 2. *Right, but not with perfect heart.* Many good things in A., had respect for ordinances of religion, knew Scriptures, and had desire to do right. But failed because not thoroughgoing in principle and piety. 1. Much half-heartedness, levity, and superficial goodness. 2. A perfect heart required. Earnest, consecrated feeling and energy. "He had a good name; it imported 'one strong in the Lord and in the power of his might;' but he was far enough from that" [*Trapp*].

Vers. 3, 4. *Two practices.* Revenge and forbearance. One natural to man and prevalent in the East. "Revenge is sweet to man." Difficult to stop with one life, without taking another. But God controls and educates men by law. The other practice of divine authority. "It is strange at first sight, that when the law contained so very plain a prohibition, the contrary practice should have established itself. But we must remember *first*; that the custom was that of the East generally, (see Dan. vi. 24; Herod. III. 119, &c.); and *secondly*, that it had the sanction of one who might be thought to know thoroughly the mind of the legislator, viz., Joshua (*cf.* Josh. vii. 24, 25)" [*Speak. Com.*]. Always better to forbear than revenge.

"Revenge at first, though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils"
[*Milton*].

Ver. 16. 1. *The question of the king.* "Art thou of the king's counsel?" Who authorises, entitles thee to give advice? 2. *The prophet's reply.* Consists of two parts—(a) He "forbare" to dispute. Silence best answer to some; contention makes them worse. (b) He predicts. "The prophet ceased his remonstrances and retired, but aimed a Parthian shaft on quitting the royal presence, 'If I am not of thy

counsel, I am of God's counsel, and know what is determined there. God has counselled to destroy thee.' For fulfilment of prophecy, see verses 12-24 and 27" [*Speak. Com.*]. *Not hearkened.* 1. A sign of hardness, judicial blindness and obduracy. 2. A ground of desertion by God. Ignored and forsaken, the result natural. 3. A prelude to destruction.

Vers. 18, 19. *The parable of Cedar and Thistle.* 1. The inequalities of character and condition of men. Great and little, contented and restless, &c. 2. The ridiculous conduct and ambition of some men. The less, the more unsettled and ambitious, the more meddlesome, &c. 3. The need to be satisfied with present possessions. Grasping after more may lose what you have. The miseries of discontent. Quench that fire which

"Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever
bore" [*Byron*].

Tarry at home. 1. Better for individuals, than meddle, create mischief with neighbours, seek home comforts and decencies. Officious interference creates discord. Meddling the parent of strife. "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling." 2. Better for nations to look to themselves, stay at home and cultivate arts of peace than engage in aggressive wars. Kings dethroned, governments upset, and empires rent asunder through hasty war.

Ver. 27. *Providential consequences.* "After the time from following the Lord. The writer means to observe that the violent death of A. followed on his apostasy not closely in point of time—for it must have been at least fifteen years after (ver. 25)—nor was, humanly speaking, caused by it; but

in the way of a divine judgment—a complete fulfilment of the prophecy, ver. 16" [*Speak. Com.*]. Sequences in the natural as well as moral world. Forsake God and duty, violate law,

then risk and disaster. "For it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 4. *Law*. When the Lord laid down that law he taxed human forbearance to the uttermost. It may not seem to be so in reality, but test the matter by human consciousness and by human action. Have we not wronged whole families? Have we not often thrown in the child as if he were part of the father, and let both be crushed by the mill of revenge? [*Dr. Parker*].

Vers. 7-9. *What of hundred talents?* Do your duty and leave the rest with God [*R. Cecil*]. This is the first of rights, the only absolute duty. No right more sacred [*Vaet*]. There is little or nothing in this life worth living for, but we can all of us go straight forward and do our duty [*Wellington*].

Vers. 11-13. *Success*. There is a glare about worldly success which is very apt to dazzle men's eyes [*Hare*]. Watch lest prosperity destroy generosity [*Beecher*]. Success at first, doth many times undo men at last [*Fenning*].

Vers. 14-16. *The gods of the people*. Idolatry is one of the most uncon-

querable of all the corrupt propensities of the human soul. Miracles under the new dispensation had scarcely ceased, apostolic fathers were scarcely cold in their graves, before idolatrous forms were again superinduced upon the pure spirituality of the Holy Gospel [*Walker*].

Vers. 17-24. *See one another in face*. Every presumption is properly an encroachment, and all encroachment carries in it a still further and a further invasion upon the person encroached upon. Presumption never stops in its first attempt. If Caesar comes once to pass the Rubicon, he will be sure to march further on, even till he enters the very bowels of Rome, and break open the Capitol itself. He that presumes steps into the throne of God [*Dr. South*].

Vers. 27, 28. *Buried*.

"Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and crown must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and
spade" [*Shirley*].

CHAPTER XXVI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Uzziah's character (vers. 1-6). "It is not too much to say that we are indebted to Chronicles for our whole conception of the character of Uz, and for nearly our whole knowledge of the events of his reign" [*Speak. Com.*]. U's fame and achievements (vers. 6-15); U's sin (vers. 16-21); U's end (vers. 22, 23). Parallel to this in 2 Ki. xiv. 21, 22; xv. 1-7.

Vers. 1-5.—*Uz's character*. *Azariah* (help from Jehovah) in Kings. *Uz*, usual form (strength from Jehovah). *Eloth*, an important port (2 Ki. xiv. 22). Ver. 5. *Days of Z*, who sustained relation Uz, as Jehoiada to Joash, exercising salutary influence and guiding.

Vers. 6-15.—*Uz's fame and achievements*. Not in Kings. *Jab*, Jabneal (Josh. xv. 11). Dismantling of these, and building of other cities among the Philistines, is a restoration of things in time of Jehoshaphat (xvii. 11). Ver. 8. *Ammonites*. Countries east of

Jordan became tributaries, and by rapid success of victories his kingdom advanced to Egyptian frontier (*cf.* Is. xvi. 1-5 with 2 Ki. iii. 4). Vers. 9, 10. *Buildings, towers* in the wilderness—*i.e.*, held pasturage on borders of Holy Land as refuges for flocks and herdsmen. *Wells* (cut out many cisterns) from rock. *Low country* between hills of Judæa and sea. *Plains* east of Jordan. *Carmel*, not the mountain, but cultivated portions of hill tract. *Husb.*, cultivated agriculture and arts of peace. Vers. 11-15. Army and engines of war. Ver. 11. *Men*, a body of militia divided into companies or regiments, which served in rotation. Ver. 12. *Number* of chiefs, heads of families, occupying positions over the army. Ver. 13. The number of troops does not exceed that in time of Amaziah (xxv. 5). Ver. 14. Different weapons for different classes of men. Ver. 15. *Engines*, machines for discharging missiles; the balista for stones, and catapult for arrows or darts.

Vers. 16-21.—*U's sin and punishment.* Lift up to do wickedly, in pride. Priests only permitted to enter holy place (Num. xviii. 7). U. presumed to act as neighbouring princes. High priest remonstrated, and intended to expel or hinder by force. Ver. 19. U. angry was struck suddenly with leprosy. Ver. 20. *Hasted*, in fear of death denounced upon those who invaded priest's office. Ver. 21. *Several*, separate, lit., *the house of liberation*, an infirmary; he was excluded from communion.

Vers. 22, 23. *U's end.* Isaiah took part in composing the records of the kingdom (chap. i. 1; vi. 6). "He cannot have been contemporary with Uz. as an adult for more than a very small portion of his long reign. Most critics regard him as about twenty when Uz died. He must then have written his history of Uz's reign rather from documents and accounts of others, than from his own knowledge" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 23. *Field, i.e.*, in the burial ground, but in a separate sepulchre, as the corpse of a leper would have polluted it.

HOMILETICS.

UZZIAH'S CHARACTER AND SUCCESSFUL REIGN.—Verses 1-15.

The reign of U. was vigorous, and signally blessed. He was successful as a king, though he failed as a man. **I. Uzziah's character is promising.** Signs of ability and usefulness. Acts well as a ruler, and fills high office with credit to himself, and benefit to the nation. 1. *He was active in promoting the interests of his kingdom.* He overcame its enemies in south and west, strengthened its fortifications and commercial relations, was a patron of agriculture, cultivated vineyards, and protected flocks. He administered internal affairs with peace and prosperity. 2. *For the greater part of his reign he lived in the fear of God.* "Did right in the sight of the Lord" (ver. 4). Never deserted the worship of the true God, and was much influenced by the prophet Zachariah. Happy in his guardian, "He sought God," who made him to prosper. **II. Uzziah's reign is successful.** Success crowned all efforts and enterprises until fatal error blasted his life. 1. *In its financial resources.* Flocks, wells, husbandmen, vine-dressers, and foreign commerce. 2. *In the extent of his dominion.* He overcame the Philistines, and demolished their cities. "God helped him against the Arabians." The Ammonites rendered tribute to him, and his conquest extended to the Egyptian frontier (ver. 8). 3. *In the strength of his defences.* Cities well fortified, military forces well organised, equipped, and commanded. 4. *In the splendour of his fame.* His name spread far and wide. Palmy days of David and Solomon seemed to return; failures of preceding reign wiped away. Judah possessed an active, enlightened, and prosperous king, who conducted himself as became viceroy of Jehovah, and prospered in all things. "His name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong" (ver. 15).

UZZIAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT.—Verses 16-21.

Long and uniform prosperity a severe trial for any prince. Uzziah's goodness gave way. "His heart was lifted up," and he committed grievous sins, for which

he suffered severe punishment. **I. Uzziah's sins.** 1. *He was lifted up with pride.* Elated with a splendid career, he forgot his position and was changed in spirit. "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up." It is strength, not weakness, that makes proud and arrogant. Affliction and reverses humble. In Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar see fearful evils of pride. "By that sin fell the angels." 2. *He usurped the priestly function.* He can do anything in his kingdom: perhaps thought priestly qualities were natural to royalty, and that in exercising them he revived suspended rights, and restored primitive custom. The intrusion a sin of great magnitude, "for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense," &c. 3. *He showed daring presumption.* The act involved a claim to abrogate the priestly office, a defiance of ancient decree originating in rebellion of Korah: it was rebuked solemnly and signally, but U. defied and resisted opposition, was determined to minister, "took the censer and was wroth with the priests."

"Pride is still aiming at the blessed abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods" [Pope].

II. Uzziah's punishment. "The Lord had smitten him." 1. *Retributive and severe.* A leper—"a leper until the day of his death." The crown lost, and his forehead stained with marks of guilt. 2. *Deprived of his own function by invading the province of others.* U. was obliged to recognise the authority which he despised; compelled to leave the palace by venturing into the priesthood, and had to dwell in a separate house, "like the slain that lie in the grave, whom Thon rememberest no more; and they are cut off from Thy hand." Be content with your own place. Discharge your own duties without seeking to intrude into others. The leprous king is a warning to all that we are not to "minister to men in things pertaining to God" without permission. Step out of your lawful calling, you create disorder, play the fool, and bring destruction upon yourselves and others.

"God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill."

UZZIAH'S SIN.

Rightly to understand it remember what barriers he had to break before he could resolve to do it. He had to disregard the direct command of Jehovah, that priests alone could burn incense upon His altar; to despise the history of his people, to defy the holy name by which he himself was called. Therefore because his rebellion was so great, his defiance of correction and of God so flagrant, the Lord smote him, and he bore till death the mark of the curse that fell upon him. **I. We see here prosperity and pride.** Mere worldly prosperity often the prelude to daring impiety. U., a good king, but a bad priest: not the priest whom God had chosen. Statecraft and policy have no claims to spiritual direction. Spirit of the gospel not that of a successful worldling, but that of a little child of the kingdom. **II. We see here pride and punishment.** It is a part of God's order of nature that bodily pains should often rebuke and reveal the workings of an ungodly soul. The solemn truth that pride and passion are destroyers of men, the remembrance of those destroyed by them, are admonitions to us. "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." **III. Punishment and shame.** Hope of Uzziah given in record of his lasting to go out of the temple. His proud heart broken; he was

smitten with shame. A man not altogether lost while he can feel shame. God quickens "the sorrow of the world, which worketh death," into "godly sorrow working repentance to salvation not to be repented of [Dr. A. Muckennal]."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. In this and the next ten chapters we have the histories of Uzziah and ten more kings of Judah, in whose days prophesied the most of the prophets, both major and minor; to whose writings these eleven chapters lend not a little light, and are therefore diligently to be read and heeded [Trapp].

Ver. 15. *Marvellously helped till strong.* Two kinds of help, natural and supernatural. 1. A time when we cannot help ourselves. Infancy. 2. A time of growth when we can help ourselves. Youth, manhood. 3. When thus strong the supernatural help ceases. Not less provision made on that account. There is joy and co-operation with God. As an earthly father requires to be obeyed and served, beholds strength and disposition to co-operate, so the Heavenly Father, &c. [Dr. Matheson].

Ver. 16. *Lifted up.* I. By pride of money. 2. By pride of intellect. 3. By pride of wit [Thain Davidson]. Learn— I. The abominable nature of pride. A rivalry and robbery of God. The sin of Satan and unregenerate men generally. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. II. The awful transgression to which it leads. Transgressed and went into the temple. "Men would be angels, angels would be gods." III. The power of God to abase and punish the proud. Honour and dominion, mind and body under God's control. Reason dethroned, the countenance stamped with idiocy, when he pleases. Madness, leprosy, and death at his bidding. "Come, and it cometh." Most exalted insignificant atoms before Him. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 8. *His name spread abroad.*

Unblemished let me live, or die unknown;
O grant an honest fame, or grant me none"
[Pope].

Ver. 16. *Went into temple.* We do not believe that the Christian ministry is any less Divine than the Levitical priesthood, or that the commission it bears is less clear and definite. The conclusion is, that the intrusion into it, an usurpation of its powers, or a violation of its order, be it by prince or peasant, by scholar or unlearned, by good men ignorantly, or by evil men presumptuously, cannot be anything else but offensive to God, and fruitful of mischief to mankind [R. Hallam, D.D.].

Ver. 18. *They withstood.* When Theodosius, the Emperor, was at Thessalonica, in revenge for certain of his judges slain there, made a great

slaughter among the people by his soldiers, who destroyed 7,000 citizens. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, heard to his great grief, and when the Emperor, afterwards returning to Milan, would have come, as his manner had been, to the holy assembly, he stoutly withstood him, saying, "With what face canst thou look upon Him who is Lord of all? With what feet canst thou enter His house, whom thou hast so deeply displeased? How canst thou receive His body with those hands so drenched in Christian blood? or drink His blood with that mouth that commanded such inhuman slaughter? Depart, therefore, and go not about to add one wickedness to another, but stand thou excommunicate, till by repentance thou hast obtained pardon of God, and given satisfaction to his offended people." The good Emperor—religiously bred, knew well what was fit for a king to

do and what for a bishop—returned to his palace, acknowledged the greatness of his sin, and spent eight months in weeping and lamentation; then coming to Ambrose, begged pardon and abso-

lution, which, after many rebukes, he obtained [*Tropp*].

“This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remem-
bering happier things” [*Tennyson*].

CHAPTER XXVII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter is par. with 2 Ki. xv. 32-38, and taken mainly from the same source or sources. Ampler than narrative in Kings, and given with certain religious reflections after manner of writer (cf. *Speak. Com.*). Jotham’s character (vers. 1, 2), Jotham’s buildings and wars (vers. 3-6), Jotham’s death and successor (vers. 7-9).

Vers. 1, 2.—J.’s character. Right, better than his father, as he did not intrude into temple. Ver. 2. *Corruptly*, which frustrated his efforts to reform (cf. 2 Ki. xv. 35). For general character of corruption, see Is. i.-v.

Vers. 3-6.—J.’s conduct. Built, i.e., repaired. *High gate*, the north hill of temple. *Ophel*, i.e., the mound or eminence or south-eastern slope of temple hill. *Much* to defend Jerusalem in every direction. Ver. 4. *Mountains*, hill tract of Judah. *Castles* (xviii. 12), forts to check invaders. *Ammon*, restless under the yoke of Uzziah (xxvi. 8), revolted against Jotham. Revolt repressed, and higher tribute exacted. Ver. 6. *Prepared*, margin *established*; directed, disposed his ways aright (cf. Prov. xxi. 29).

Vers. 7-9.—J.’s death. Wars besides with Ammon, in later years with Rezin and Pekah (cf. 2 Ki. xv. 37). *City*, i.e., “with his fathers” (2 Ki. xv. 38), in the sepulchre of the kings.

HOMILETICS.

JOTHAM’S PROSPEROUS REIGN.—Verses 1-8.

I. He began by imitating his father in good, not evil ways.

Amaziah considered a good king in the greater portion of his reign, though guilty of two great sins (cf. 2 Ki. xiv. 3 and 2 Chr. xxv. 2, 14, 16). J. imitated his father in all respects, except impious usurpation of priestly office. Far more easy to copy bad than good deeds. But J. took warning from his father’s folly and punishment, acted a wise part, and displayed a piety singular and conspicuous among “the people” who “did corruptly.” **II. He became powerful by the adoption of right measures.** He detected the dangers, and desired the welfare of his kingdom. 1. *His military measures.* He strengthened Jerusalem, fortified country places, and repressed revolting nations. Wise to fortify against attack and guard weak places in character, churches, and kingdoms. 2. *In religious measures.* “He prepared his ways before the Lord his God” (ver. 6). Earnest and whole-hearted in piety. Thoughts fixed on God, and desired to please him in life. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” This leads to power and prosperity, for both come from God. The more steadfast in religion, the more able to resist evil, perform good, and influence others.

PREPARATION AND STRENGTH.—Verse 6.

Here we get an insight into Jotham’s purpose and ways. He *prepared* his ways, exercised forethought, arrangement, and prayer. **I. All strength is gained by preparation.** Not the result of accident or negligence.

Strength of body and mind, strength of character and position, result from exercise, discipline, and growth. The virtue of the soil, the events of Providence, the creation of the world, and the incarnation of Christ after long and silent preparation. **II. All preparation must be in recognition of God.** This invests all acts with influence, and gives them religious character. "Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field." 1. *In recognition of God's supremacy.* "Before the Lord." God sovereign and supreme Ruler. All power in his hands, all events under his control. 2. *In covenant with His mercy.* "Before the Lord thy God." Conscious of God's presence and love; a sense of interest and sonship. Loving appropriation and humble dependence. **III. When a person thus prepares his ways before God, he will become mighty.** "J. became mighty because he prepared his way." Preparations never vain; rashness and haste lead to failure and misfortune. Strength and success gained by fixed resolve, entire consecration, and devout preparation. Mighty in prayer, influence for good given "before God"; required in Christian effort and in a sinful world. "Mighty through God."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 2. "According to all that his father Uzziah did." One single act of impiety destroys not general good character of his reign [*Speak. Com.*]. People did corruptly, civil injustice and social cruelty; laborious service and empty ritual; foreign oppression and providential misery (*cf.* Is. i.-v.). Jotham a witness for God in prevalent corruption and national faithlessness.

Vers. 1-9. *Jotham's life.* His mother's name and relations. His age at succession (ver. 1). His great achievements: built cities, conquered enemies, and became mighty in fame, wealth, and power. His death a lamentation, and his son an unworthy successor. "Wrought a woeful change, being *optimi patris pessimus filius*" [*Trapp*].

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter corresponds with 2 Ki. xvi., and gives chief events in same order. Narrative fuller in military affairs, yet an omission of two or three facts. Idolatry of A. and its consequences (vers. 1-8); release of captives (vers. 9-15); Assyrian help sought (vers. 16-21); continued trespass and distress (vers. 22-25); end of A. (ver. 26, 27).

Vers. 1-8.—*Idolatry of A. and its consequences.* Ver. 2. *Molten*, i.e., representatives of different forms or characters of the chief Phœnician deity. Return to superstition of Northern kingdom, from which Judah had been clear since days of Joash. Ver. 3. *Burnt*, restored worship of Moloch, savage god of Ammon. *Heathen*, Canaanites. Ver. 4. *Tree*, great extremes (*cf.* 2 Ki. xvi. 4). Ver. 5. Two battles with Rezin and Pekah not in Kings. Ver. 7. *Azrik.*, governor, chief officer of royal palace (*cf.* 1 Ki. iv. 6; xviii. 3; 2 Ki. xviii. 18).

Vers. 9-15.—*Release of captives.* *Oded*, possibly same as *Ido*. *Samaria*, where Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets exercised their vocation. *Rage*, great, violent, and displeasing to God; *reacheth*, where God hears. Ver. 10. *Purpose*, in heart. *Sins*, with you greater than in Judah, therefore oppress not erring brothers. Ver. 11. *Deliver*, send back. *Fierce*, law forbade Israel to make bondmen (Lev. xxv. 39-46). Ver. 12. *Heads*, patriarchal chiefs who formed king's counsel. Ver. 13. Forbade captives to be brought into Samaria. *Offended*, remembered, confessed their own sins, and felt ashamed. Ver. 14. Remonstrance successful. Ver. 15. *Name*, the four in ver. 12, acting with general consent of whole body of princes and people. Ver. 15. Prisoners released, led with spoil, and conveyed to Jericho on their way home. *Palm* (Deut. xxxiv. 3).

Vers. 16-21.—*Assyrian help sought. Time*, after disastrous war with Ephraim and Aram. *Kings*, more than one in succession or in conjunction; other versions give singular instead of plural. Vers. 17, 18. Assign reason for seeking help. Invasion (ver. 18) and refractoriness of Judah (ver. 19). *Naked*, lit., “had caused licentiousness in Judah.” Had allowed Judah to break loose from religious restraint. Ver. 20. *Distressed* by heavy tribute, and no help rendered.

Vers. 22-25.—*Continued trespass and affliction. Yet more*, “trespassed still more.” Spoliation (ver. 21) of no avail. Ver. 23. *Sacrificed*, superstition led him to believe that he might receive aid from the gods of D., Hadad, Rimmon, &c. (2 Ki. xvi. 10-16). Ver. 24. *Cut*, demolished; *shut up*, suspended worship, and made altars after models at Damascus. *Several*, separate.

Vers. 26, 27.—*End and burial of A. Written, &c.* (2 Ki. xvi.). Ver. 27. *Brought not*, buried with his fathers (2 Ki. xvi. 20), but not in sepulchres of the kings. Not an honourable burial.

HOMILETICS.

THE EVIL REIGN OF AHAZ.—Verses 1-7.

A. forgot principles and example of his father. Soon apparent by what unhappy influences he was surrounded, and to what degeneracy the people had fallen. Increase of worldly wealth and luxury in reigns of Azariah and Jotham introduced corruptions which, by the example of Ahaz, prevailed in idolatrous practices of every kind (ver. 24). **I. The unmitigated wickedness of Ahaz.** A. one of the stupendous examples of Israel, one of the few men in history of whom not one good thing is recorded. His wickedness uniform, unmitigated and extraordinary development. 1. *He patronised symbolic worship of Israel.* “Walked in the ways of Israel” (2 Ki. xvi. 3) at beginning of reign. All forms and practices of heathenism among Israelites he adopted. 2. *He practised gross idolatry of Canaan.* Not content with paganism, he imported fresh modes of worship. He restored idolatry of Moloch, and fixed it under the very walls of the city, “the valley of Hinnom.” He gave personal sanction to cruel rites, by causing his sons to pass through fire, to burn them to death, or purify them and dedicate them to heathen gods. A custom in Persia for the king to send his son, seated on a black horse, to ride through the flames, to prove sacredness of character and to show the people fire will not hurt. This practice forbidden by law (Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; Deut. xviii. 10). **II. The fearful consequences of this wickedness.** Having left God, God forsook him, and a series of calamities happen. 1. *Deliverance unto the Syrians.* This the issue of a confederate invasion. False dependence, heathen gods could not protect. 2. *Fearful slaughter.* Smitten by kings of Assyria and of Israel “with a great slaughter,” a complete panic and rout result. Defeat bereft them of defence, and they allowed themselves to be slaughtered like sheep. 3. *Disgraceful captivity.* “A great multitude of them captives” (ver. 5). Made prisoners, they were divided between allies, sent off under military escort to capitals of Syria and Israel. 4. *National calamity.* Persons of distinction among captured or slain (ver. 7). The king’s (probably Jotham’s) son, governor of Royal Palace and Prime Minister. Loss of these chief officers a national calamity. “How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle?” Thus blood shed, country wasted, and families ruined through sin. A good king may shelter a corrupt people; a bad king may bring judgments like a flood. The happiness of one reign may be valued by miseries of another.

THE RELEASE OF CAPTIVES.—Verses 8-15.

Report of “brethren” led captive excited indignation in better disposed. Oded, a prophet, went out, accompanied with princes, to meet the escort and to prevent disgrace of introducing such prisoners into the city. **I. Released**

through stern rebuke of the prophet. O. did not applaud their valour and congratulate them on their victory—in God's name declared their faults and warned them of judgment. 1. *Rebuked pride of victory.* Not by superiority in numbers, arms, and valour had they overcome; but in consequence of Divine judgments against Israel. Not for *the righteousness of victors* (Deut. ix. 5), but for *the wickedness of the vanquished*; therefore boast not, "be not high-minded, but fear" (Rom. xi. 20, 21). 2. *Rebuked abuse of power.* Victory gave no authority for cruelty. Offensive to keep "brethren" as slaves in war. Might not always right. They had "slain them in a rage," and they further "purposed to keep them under" and sell them as "bondmen and bondwomen." "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." 3. *Rebuked forgetfulness of personal guilt.* "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" (ver. 10). Ten tribes not innocent, fallen away more completely, more hopelessly, than the two. Severity would add to their guilt and aggravate their punishment. "Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" **II. Released through the humanity of the people.** Spirited remonstrance not in vain—chiefs, soldiers, and people touched. 1. *Displayed in the opposition of chiefs* (ver. 12). Conscience-stricken when reminded of their own sins. Men of character and high position, remarkable for benevolent feeling, forbade entrance of captives into Samaria—took lead in difficult task of restoring them, and gained themselves a name. 2. *Displayed in compliance of soldiers.* Soldiers only obeying orders, might have defended what they gained by sword; but yielded, left captives and spoil at disposal of "the princes" (ver. 14). Right to give up what is wrong to retain—more generous to yield to reason and religion than to stick at self-interest. 3. *Displayed in the kindness of the people.* Under benevolent superintendence the captives clothed and fed from the spoils; assisted in their weakness and conveyed on their way home (ver. 15). A beautiful incident, and full of interest. A proof of loyalty to law amid national decline, of generosity in scenes of cruelty, and a type of a greater deliverance in the Gospel.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-5. *Like son, like father.* In A. we have—I. A son who rebelled against the maxims of his father. Instead of carrying on improvements inaugurated by his father, we find that he initiated altogether a new state of things. II. A father who was devoid of natural affection towards his children. "He burnt his children in the fire." III. The wicked sons of good fathers may sometimes be fathers themselves, and the evil they have done will be repaid to them again [*Bib. Mus.*].

Vers. 9-11. *Oded went out*—1. In courageous spirit. Defying risk to meet face to face. 2. In faithfulness to God, for whom he acted, and from whom received help. 3. In benevolent design. *Hear me.* Here we have the

picture of a good preacher. Oded teacheth, reproveth, exhorteth, turneth himself into all shapes, of spirit and of speech, that he may work upon his hearers; and he had his desire. See Timothy's task (2 Tim. iv. 2, 3) [*Trapp*]. *Reacheth up to heaven.* Sins of violence—1. Seen by God; 2. Provoke God; 3. Will be punished by God. "Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass (guiltiness) is grown up unto the heavens" (Ez. ix. 6).

Ver. 10. *Personal guilt, a sense of our own sins should check*—1. In the pride of triumph. 2. In the control of passion. 3. In the neglect of charity. Know self, moderate resentment, and imitate God's compassion. Or learn—1. Man's readi-

ness to judge others. 2. By judging, treating others harshly, we condemn ourselves. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

"We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to
render
The deeds of mercy" [*Shakes.*].

Ver. 15. *Primitive charity.* Clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, helping the weak, &c. "We can scarcely find a parallel to this in the

universal history of the wars which savage man has carried on against his fellows from the foundation of the world" [*A. Clarke*]. That which happened in the time of Ahaz, was to occur again, as Is. xliii. 5, 6, and lx. 3, and other similar passages show on a much larger, more glorious scale at the time of the great redemption. We see at once from the words themselves with what pleasure the historian dwells upon this event [*Keil*].

HOMILETICS.

APPEAL FOR ASSYRIAN HELP.—Verses 16–21.

Invasion of Judah by Rezin and Pekah not mere predatory expedition, but designed to reduce the country, upset the royal family, and establish another tributary prince. Extirpation of dynasties common in East. The older and more venerated the dynasty, the more needful to destroy it. The unconditional promise to David prevented change, and occasioned defeat of allies. **I. Appeal in imminent danger.** Kingdom reduced to great distress—1. By *Invasions of the enemy.* After succession of defeats, retreated within walls of Jerusalem, and besieged. Country infested north and south, and cities captured. 2. By *Providential disaster.* "For the Lord brought Judah low." Bereft of wealth and power, humbled and helpless for defence. As despicable as they had been formidable. 3. By *Internal disorder.* "For he made Judah naked," caused licentiousness in Judah. Bonds of government loosened, restraints of religion thrown off, and idolatry of every degree practised. **II. Appeal which cost immense sacrifice.** "A. took away a portion of the house of the Lord, &c." (ver. 21). 1. *Self independence.* "I am thy servant and thy son" (2 Ki. xvi. 7). A plain acknowledgment of his dependent position, and the submission of a vassal. 2. *Enormous treasure.* To procure adequate sum for protection the palace and the temple ransacked. Costly is the price of sin and departure from God. **III. Appeal which ended in disappointment.** Relief only temporary. Assyria prepared for the advantage. The end worse than the beginning. "The King of Assyria came unto him and distressed him, but strengthened him not." Distressed—1. *By occupying the land.* Hostile inroads of the enemy devastated the kingdom. Invaders, like Saxons invited by Britons against Picts and Scots, remained masters of the land. 2. *By exacting heavy tribute.* Payments exhausting, impoverished and weakened. The submission of Judah, proffered by Ahaz, pleasing and of utmost importance to projects of conquest. Money demanded in return for help. 3. *By withholding help desired.* Nothing but disappointment at last: "But he helped him not" (ver. 21). Ahaz not placed in a safe and independent position; an actual for a threatened subjection resulted. It led to further idolatry and risk, which provoked God's anger and tended to ruin the nation. Sin no "help" nor "strength," but a cause of "distress." Confidence in men, the world, and false ways, create disappointment and pierce the hand like a broken reed. "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Be firm in faith, or ye will not be made firm in fact [*Speak. Com., Is. vii. 9*].

AHAZ'S DEEPER SINS AND MISERIES.—*Verses 22-25.*

The infatuated king unchastened by distress, surrendered himself to slavish fear and pursued his course "yet more against the Lord." Notice—**I. The wilful obstinacy displayed in his evil course.** He exerted royal authority to extend idolatry; suspended the worship of Jehovah in the temple; committed gross sacrilege, and superseded the altar of God by one from Damascus. He discarded the doctrine of one true God and affected polytheism. His religion was a kind of diplomacy. The Temple, the residence of Jehovah, by the help of the priesthood, was turned into a shelter for idols, and in the streets of Jerusalem were erected altars to foreign gods. **II. The fearful consequences of this obstinacy.** "He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which smote him." 1. *God provoked to anger* (ver. 25). "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it," by proofs of penitence and amendment of life. 2. *Ruin brought upon himself and kingdom.* "They were the ruin of him and of all Israel." The gods of Syria befriended him no more than the kings of Assyria. He was cut off in the midst of his days. Pernicious influence of idolatry lasted through the reforms of next reign, and only destroyed after Babylonian captivity. **III. The awful stigma which rested upon him through this obstinate course.** "This is that king Ahaz." Like "Jeroboam who made Israel to sin," and Judas who betrayed the Saviour, he is branded by the spirit of God. If ever a man is to be held up as a warning, *this is the man.* Mark him, shun his ways. Not one good thing in his life and no hope in his death!

ABUSE OF JUDGMENT.—*Verse 22.*

"Trespassed more and more" in utterly forsaking God and selling himself to sin. **I. Judgment abused by mistaking it.** He thought because Syrian gods helped them, they would be of service to him. Jehovah had smitten him and helped his enemies, but he could or would not see it. He therefore sacrificed to idols. This a vulgar conception of God, and leads to abuse of devotion and into greater risk. **II. Judgment abused by defying it.** There is still a lofty imperial spirit in Ahaz. Neither judgment nor mercy opens his eyes. When overthrown he must still fight against God, be master of his own condition and destiny. He abused the house of God, the altar of God, and the judgments of God. His heart was more fully set to do evil, and he "provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers."

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF KING AHAZ.

I. That a course of sin is continually downward. This is a fundamental law of character, the natural working of sin. It propagates itself, but is not self-reformatory. One kind of sin produces another kind, and the law of habit applies to physical, mental, and moral actions. Character becomes fixed. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin." **II. That God is faithful in checking men in this downward course.** "The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz, King of Israel" (ver. 19). Disappointed in alliances, overcome in war, captives taken by thousands, and nothing going well. God contended with him, but was despised by him; persevered in efforts to check him, but was defied and resisted. God ever seeks by his providence and spirit to turn men from an evil course which will end in ruin. "That he may withdraw man from his purpose (marg., work) and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from

the pit and his life from perishing by the sword." **III. That if men will not be checked in a downward course they may become notable examples of punishment.** "This is that king Ahaz" (ver. 22). The end is come, but not the end of life. Chastised, but not corrected, given to idols and let alone, "he did trespass yet more." What possibilities of human guilt! What distinctions in human shame! "Is not destruction to the wicked and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?"

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 16. *Send* in spite of promise given by Isaiah (vii. 14; viii. 4), the one immediate and the other remote, that confederate kings should not prevail over him. This—1. *A forgetfulness, wilful rejection of divine assurance.* Ahaz by his unbelief had not only disestablished himself (ver. 9), he mortgaged the hope of Israel. He had a policy of his own, and was determined to pursue it. He betrayed the Messiah and deliverer of his people. The assurance of this betrayal is the sign of his obduracy, a signal and terrible proof of his irretrievable sin in calling upon the Assyrians. The king has been found wanting" (cf. Smith's Bk. of Is., p. 118). 2. *An unworthy acknowledgment of human dependence.* God would have been his help, but he foolishly turned to those who ruined him. This proved by Scripture and by Assyrian monuments, which record payment of tribute by tribes of Israel. "His heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind," in craven fear (Is. vii. 2).

Ver. 19. *Israel low.* The influence of the ruler upon the nation's welfare and condition. Nakedness or abundance, internal anarchy or prevalent order. The higher the rank the more aggravated the sin. A corrupt king a corrupt court (like that of Charles II.). "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child."

Ver. 21 (cf. 2 Ki. xvi. 8). *Sacrilege upon the House of God.* 1. The king's self-willed assault on established institutions. II. The high priest's concessions. See in this a clear picture of the lack of Christian spirit in the two highest ranks. The State desires to

see everything arranged according to its whims: the Church yields for the sake of temporal advantage [*Bib. Mus.*].

Ver. 22. *This king Ahaz.* The stigma fixed. 1. An expression of the writer's feelings. 2. An example of the force of sin. 3. A providential warning to all. "Learn wisdom by the folly of others."

Ver. 23. I. The true God forsaken. 1. From wrong views of his character. 2. From false confidence in his rivals. II. The certain ruin which results from this course. "The ruin of him." Ruin personal and national, physical and moral, present and future. Gods of heathen, gods of sectarianism, gods of gold, or gods of learning will bring ruin. Mistake to seek inspiration, to covet relief, and implore deliverance from wrong sources. "Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted."

Vers. 26, 27. *Acts of Ahaz,* which may be thus summed up: 1. His proud and faithless refusal of a sign by the mouth of Isaiah (vii. 10-13); 2. His discontinuance of temple worship by closing the temple itself; 3. His desecration of the sacred vessels; 4. His erection of altars to the false gods in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah; 5. His sacrificing to the gods of Damascus that they might help him. The first and last of these offences belonged to the early part of his reign, the others were among the latest practices, and to be reversed by his successor in the kingdom (2 Ki. xviii. 4; 2 Chr. xxix. 3, 19) [*Speak. Com.*].

1. *The Character of Ahaz.* 1. He was one of those whose iniquity is

enhanced by the contempt of spiritual privileges; 2. His downward career was rapidly progressive; 3. He reached the lowest point of human obduracy. II. The illustration he affords of the appalling power of sin. 1. Evil habits strengthen by indulgence; 2. The

world increases its power over its votaries as they advance in life; 3. Sinners in mature years lose the perception of religious truth; 4. There is a limit to divine endurance, and hardened transgressors are often left to perish in their sin [*Bib. Mus.*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXVIII

Vers. 1-5. *Did not right.* How many a son of godly parents is destroyed by evil communications. Companions first known at school, by near residence, or picked up casually at a friend's house, often blight the most promising young life. It would be mere affectation to suppose that the history of Ahaz is unconnected with the prevalent corruption in Judah during his father's reign. Pharaoh himself was not a more signal instance of forbearance of judgment than he. He had a godly example and godly counsel in his father. But other mercies were given to him, and though some were *severe* chastisements, yet were they mercies nevertheless, and should have been for his good [*Ed. Walker, Ser. O. T. Subjects*].

Vers. 3-5. *Children in fire.* The king seems to have had a mania for foreign religions. The worship of Moloch was now established in the valley of Hinnom, in a spot known by the name of

Tophet, close under the walls of Jerusalem. There the brazen statue of the god was erected, with the furnace within, or at its feet, into which the children were thrown. To this dreadful form of human sacrifice Ahaz gave the highest sanction by the devotion of one or more of his sons [*Stanley*].

Vers. 9-15. *Clemency.* The record of this act of compassion of these Israelites towards the captives of Judah is to be noted as affording a refutation of the allegation of some modern critics that the writer of Chronicles was swayed by partiality for Judah and by prejudice against Israel [*Wordsworth*].

Vers. 22-25. *Continued sin.* The way of sin is down hill, a man cannot stop where he would, and he that will be tampering with dangerous occasions in confidence of his resolution, shall often find himself carried beyond his purpose [*Abp. Leighton*].

CHAPTER XXIX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Hezekiah's reign commenced and carried through four chapters in marked contrast with corresponding portion (2 Ki. xviii.-xx.). The writer of Kings fixes on civil affairs—the two invasions of Sennacherib and on the embassy of Merodach-baladan, related at length, passing lightly and hastily over Hezekiah's reformation (ch. xviii. 4-7), the author of Chron. gives a full account of this latter in three chapters (xxix.-xxxi.), compressing into one (xxxi.) the whole that he has to say of the civil history of the reign. Thus chs. xxix. to xxxi. of 2 Chron. contain matter which is almost wholly new; while ch. xxxii. is little more than a brief summary of what the writer of Kings has related fully in the three chapters which he has devoted to this reign [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-11.—*H.'s good beginning and restoration of worship.* *Zech.*, possibly the person given Is. viii. 2. *Right*, his father's idolatry revolting to him; he began restoration at once. Ver. 3. *Opened doors* closed by his father (ch. xxviii. 24); *repaired*, lit. made them strong, damaged by Ahaz (cf. 2 Ki. xviii. 16). Ver. 4. *East street*, probably open space before

eastern gate. *Sanctify*, Levitical purity (1 Chr. xv. 12, 13). *Filth*, stains of idolatry. Ver. 6. *Fathers*, Ahaz and his contemporaries. *Turned back*, not looking towards rising sun, as Ezek. viii. 16, with their faces from the Temple; but, figuratively, for neglecting and despising God. Ver. 7. Acts of Ahaz. Ver. 8. Punishment for these acts in expressions which are new and have no parallel in the rest of Chron., one which Hez. might naturally use, for it had occurred in a prophecy of Micah (vi. 16), his contemporary and monitor (Jer. xxvi. 18), which was probably uttered towards the close of Ahaz's reign. In Jeremiah phrase becomes common (Jer. xviii. 16; xix. 8; xxv. 9, &c.) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 9. *Cf.* ch. xxviii. 6-8. Ver. 10. Purpose of H. Ver. 11. *Sons*, affectionate, hearty appeal to priests and Levites. *Negligent*, remiss; *burn*, make any fire offering generally.

Vers. 12-19.—*The Temple cleansed*. Fourteen chiefs undertake to collect and prepare their brethren. Ver. 15. *At commandment of king*, "in the business (matters) of the Lord," prescribed by law (Ex. xix. 22; Lev. xi. 44). Ver. 16. Priests only entered the house of the Lord. Whatever found there unclean they brought into the outer court, where Levites took it from them to carry beyond boundary of Temple. *Kidron* (ch. xxx. 14; 2 Ki. xxiii. 12). Ver. 17. Work began first day with purification of courts and reached porch eighth day. Then eight days more to cleanse Temple; sixteen altogether. Ver. 18. *Altar*, great brazen, before porch. Ver. 19. *Cast away* (ch. xxviii. 24; 2 Ki. xvi. 14).

Vers. 20-26.—*Hez.'s sin-offering*. Early next day H. went with princes, without waiting to assemble representatives of the nation. Ver. 21. *Seven*, number of covenant. *Kingdom*, i.e., for sins of kings and predecessors; *sanctuary*, for sins of priests; *Judah*, for sins of the nation. Ver. 22. Blood expiates, and Levitical rites duly observed in shedding it. Ver. 23. Sin-offering; *hands* (Lev. i. 4; iv. 15, 24). Ver. 24. *All Israel* repeated twice, for sanctuary belonged to all Israel, and invitation given for northern tribes to take part in passover (ch. xxx. 1). "Northern kingdom in a state of anarchy. Four Assyrian invasions had swept over it within thirty-five years. Hoshea, contemporary of Hez., not an independent ruler. Hence Hez. invited revolted tribes to return, if not to their old temporal, to their old spiritual allegiance. To prepare the way for this return, he included 'all Israel' in expiatory sacrifice" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 25. *Cf.* 1 Chr. xvi. 4; xxiii. 5; xxix. 29. *Trumpets*, cf. Num. x. 8; 1 Chr. xv. 24; 2 Chr. v. 12.

Vers. 27-31.—*Hez.'s burnt-offering*. Consumed on altar, only fat for sin-offering (Lev. iv. 19). A sound of instruments heard when old worship recommenced. *Sang*, some anthem for the occasion. All bowed (ver. 29) in solemn worship. At invitation of king a great number of thank-offerings presented.

Vers. 31-36.—*Order of service completed*. Flaying of victims not a priestly function, but a work of the offerer (Lev. i. 6) at first, afterwards on public occasions by Levites, as here. Ver. 34. *Upright*, i.e., displayed more alacrity than priests; perhaps tainted by idolatry, and looked coldly on reforms of Hez. Ver. 35. Another reason which prevented priests from flaying to completion, was the great demand upon their time by the work to be done. Ver. 36. No small joy at opening of newly consecrated Temple. *Prepared* the people's minds, or it could not have been done so heartily and immediately.

HOMILETICS.

HEZEKIAH'S REFORMS IN THE TEMPLE.—Verses 1-11.

The reign of H. (726-697) culminating point in history of kings of Judah. Whether or not contemporary prophecies foretelling the birth of a Divine Heir to the throne, contained any reference to the son of Ahaz, then a mere child, it is certain that no other Prince since the death of David could so well have answered to them (*Hezekiah*, Jehovah strengthens). In point of fact, he was the centre of the highest prophetic influence which had appeared since Elijah [*Stanley*]. **I. The work itself was well chosen.** Methods for extirpating idolatry and accomplishing thorough reformation given in detail. **1. God's work chosen first.** Temple, sacred work. Needful to strengthen and defend his empire, but no work for God can prosper without friendship with God. **H.** might have done many useful works, become a benefactor to his people, but saw re-opening of fellowship with God most required for nations and individuals. "Seek first the kingdom of God, &c." (a) *This in opposition to past example*. He did not follow the example of a wicked father, nor listen to the voice of a corrupt court, &c., but did "that which was good and right and

truth before the Lord his God." (b) *This as a promise of future usefulness.* Chose out a work of his own, opened doors, repaired and cleansed the Temple. He pursues work in perplexity, difficulty, and peril. 2. *God's work deliberately chosen.* "It is in mine heart" (ver. 10). He begins in right way, and at right end; shows in what consists true wisdom and wise government. A happy opening, an encouraging pledge of his whole course. A course which *begins* with God, will be one of usefulness and triumph. **II. The spirit in which the work was performed was commendable.** No compromise; no half-measures; no delay. "In the first year of his reign" he began and delayed not. 1. *In personal consecration* (ver. 10). All reformation begins here. Outward work done from life within. Everything depends upon our relation to God, that is, there is a strong moral link between our estimate of God and success. 2. *In tracing historical relationship.* He looks back, reads providence, and finds his work. We cannot work efficiently without a survey of the field, and an insight into present requirements. We have incentives to work when we see need of its performance, and feel called to perform it. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" 3. *In the strength of deep conviction.* Convinced of sin and bitter fruits of idolatry, he determines to reverse policy of his father; announced his resolution at beginning of his reign, and waited not for consolidation of his rule. Courage and determination characterise all earnest reformers. 4. *In seeking co-operation from others.* Desired help from the ministry (ver. 5). "Sanctify yourselves." By legal rites, specially by penitence, faith and fresh obedience. We should be sensible of our own, and the sins of our fathers; earnestly cleanse ourselves, and co-operate for reformation of others. Let each man, therefore, do what he can, but remember that the secret of social development is combination—that the best social system is that in which organisation for the common good is made most complete and most efficient.

THE LEVITES ENLISTED TO HELP.—Verses 11-19.

The response to H.'s appeal given by Levites in united, hearty service. "Then the Levites arose." Notice—**I. The method in which they rendered help.** 1. They were united. "They gathered their brethren and worked altogether." 2. They worked in orderly arrangement. Began with outer courts—those of priests and people; they proceeded to inner. But as Levites could not enter the Temple, sweepings were brought by priests to porch, and then carried to Kidron. No hurry; no disorder. "All things done decently and in order." **II. The rule by which they were guided.** As "commandment of the king," but with a desire to obey God's word. "Let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them" (Ex. xix. 22; cf. 1 Chron. xxv. 5; 2 Chron. xxx. 12). **III. The report which they made.** The house, the altar, and the vessels all cleansed and ready for use. Glad themselves, they came to gladden the king, not to seek reward, nor boast of care and trouble. Happy those who can report successful work. But never failure! To open and repair the door, to light the lamps and sweep the floor acceptable to God. Let each resolve, "It is in mine heart" (ver. 10).

"Do not, for one repulse, forego the purpose
That you resolved to effect" [*Shaks.*].

PRAISE AND WORSHIP.—Verse 30.

In sixteen days the burnt-offering began; songs were heard, the trumpet rent the place, and all hearts quivered with joy. Observe two points—**I. They**

were old words that the people sang. Moreover H. the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David and Asaph the seer. What do we want with new words, new hymns, new forms of praise? The time is coming—would it could hasten its longed-for advent—when there will be only one book in the Church. At present the number has been reduced in many instances to two, and one of them we do not want. The time will come when the Bible will be the only hymn book in the house of God. What hymns like the hymns of the Bible? What devotional language like the devotional language of the Psalms? What finer teacher could we have than David, Asaph, and Isaiah, and the mighty minstrels and prophets of Israel? The people had the words all ready. If we want to sing we need not wait for some man to make words for us; so long as the Psalms are before us we may begin our song at once. **II. Not only were the words old, the enthusiasm was new.** “And they sang praises with gladness,” literally with exultation, with rapture. Religion is nothing if not enthusiastic. Praise without exultation is but a skeleton form. The whole place in which Christians are assembled for worship should vibrate, tingle again because of the mighty, gracious, holy song. Here we have the changeable and the permanent—the permanent in “the words of David and of Asaph the seer;” and the changeable or capable of increase and variation is the gladness, the enthusiasm, the transport, the holy rapture. Nor was it merely vocal in the sense of displaying musical gymnastic skill, for the people having sung with rapture as if they had not space enough to sing in, as if they would split the overarching heaven with their cry, “they bowed their heads and worshipped.” The look was upward, downward; wild with an infinite rationalistic joy, and subdued because of a sense of the majesty of heaven [Dr. Parker].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1, 2. Notice—I. *A mother's influence in the training of Hezekiah.* “His mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.” Ver. 1. Probably the Zechariah whose influence for good was signally owned of God in the reign of Uzziah (ch. xxvi. 5). Perhaps Abijah was neglected by her husband, surrounded by greatest difficulties, for every corner of Judah full of idols; yet she attended to duty, felt the solemnity of her trust, and wonderfully succeeded. II. *The sovereign grace of God in the conversion of Hezekiah.* A wicked father, a corrupt court, and an idolatrous country, yet Hezekiah chosen and qualified in youth for the throne, and became one of the best three kings of the Jews. “All except David, Ezekias, and Josias were defective, for they forsook the law of the Most Highest; even the kings of Judah failed” (Ecclus. xlix. 4). This encouragement to parents. God delights in miracles of grace; saves children of

unchristian parents, and crowns with honour the faithfulness of godly parents. III. *The great work which God performs in the youth of Hezekiah.* Only 20 or 25 years old when he began to reign, no common character, no ordinary piety in one so young. The work begun and begun rightly, as soon as seated on the throne; accomplished splendidly by the providence of God. “The Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth.”

Vers. 6–10. I. *A description of apostasy.* Mark the order of departure. *Trespassed*, going beyond; *forsaken him*, then turning away their faces from the *habitation*; God forsaken, worship forsaken; finally “turned their backs” entirely and choosing idolatry, the source of all misery. II. *The fearful evils which follow* exposed to God's wrath manifest—1. In the invasion and devastation of land, “upon Judah and Jerusalem.” 2. In the fall and

mourning of families, "our fathers have fallen by the sword." 3. In the evils of foreign captivity, "our sons, daughters, and wives are in captivity."

4. In the disgrace to which they were reduced. Former prosperity and glory fled, now a byword and hissing, &c.

III. *The source to which these evils are traced.* Hezekiah had discernment to ascribe national calamities to right cause. God caused them on account of their sins. Others, servants or ministers of a moral providence. Men, forces of nature no power at all except given from above. Hence (a) no ground for violence and petty reprisals. Keep down anger against mere agents; (b) The necessity of forming correct estimates of outward vicissitudes, and (c) of learning to discover and submit to God's will the great rule of the universe. As Wordsworth—

"One adequate support,
For the calamities of mortal life,
Exists—one only, an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, however
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

Ver. 11. *My sons. A fatherly king.* With what gentle, paternal eloquence Hezekiah addressed the men on whose co-operation he relied. A pastoral king: a most shepherdly heart was the heart of king Hezekiah. There is a fatherliness that does not depend on age. Hezekiah not an old man, spoke not from under a crown of hoary hairs; but a father because of his capacity of love, unselfish solicitude, patriotic aspiration. There are young pastors, born shepherds; in earliest conscious life they seem to be made to care for others. The pastor is a man who can carry all men. You cannot make pastors, kings, or fathers. Men may bear the nominal functions, but here an entail sanctioned by heaven. Have not some men a right to accost us as sons? Is there not a touch which means solicitude, brotherhood, unity, mutual understanding? The words come to Hezekiah as he needs them; they are his servants, wait upon him. Thus he talks with healthy frankness, tender appreciation, and majestic familiarity which cannot be trifled with [*Dr. Parker*].

HOMILETICS.

CONSECRATION AND SACRIFICES.—Verses 20–31.

I. Sacrifices expiatory. Sin-offerings to atone and make worshipper acceptable to God. Unusually comprehensive, embracing four kinds, and seven of each kind, for sins conscious and unconscious. **II. Sacrifices for all classes.** "For the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah"—i.e., for king or royal house, ministers of the sanctuary, and the people of Judah generally. "Atonement for all Israel" as well as Judah (ver. 24). **III. Sacrifices dedicatory.** After sin-offering, the burnt-offering presented, an expression of self-dedication to God. This a natural order—acceptance, gratitude, and self-consecration. "Now that you have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices" (ver. 31). Sacrifices abundant, generous, and appropriate. **IV. Sacrifices accompanied with symbolic rites.** 1. Laying on of hands, confessing guilt. 2. Instruments of music expressing gladness. 3. Bowing of heads denoting reverence and adoration. The solemnities of the day memorable, typical, surprising, and a proof of God's presence. "For the thing was done suddenly."

MUSIC AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE.—Verses 25–30.

This scene beautiful and suggestive. Old life forsaken; new forms of worship resumed, fresh sacrifices presented, and monarch and people working together

with gladness and rejoicing. **I. Christian service begins with fresh demands upon our life.** "Now ye have consecrated yourselves, come near." Once far off; now sin forsaken; and all dedicated to God. Near in faith and fellowship, in purpose and daily life. Fresh demands upon time, talents, and efforts. Sacrifices not to self and world, but to God and his cause. Self-surrender, represented by burnt-offerings, perpetually needful. Will and life given to another. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." **II. Christian service is a joyful service when these demands are satisfied.** "The congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings." No joy in appropriating to self and withholding from God what is due. No happy life except in self-devotion to God and in doing good to others. To live in, and to be of no service to the world, a terrible thing. "The liberal soul (lit., the soul of blessing; *i.e.*, that blesses others) shall be made fat" (satisfied and gladdened) (Prov. xi. 25). Always a re-active influence in temporal and spiritual matters; action and reciprocal influence the law of the universe. Withhold it, will tend to poverty of spirit; "give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, &c."

"The truly generous is the truly wise,
And he who loves not others lives unblest."

III. This joyful service is the strength of Christian life. Joy from duty not mere luxury or excitement, but help, strength to more perfect work. Whatever God is *for us*—life, light, love, and strength—it is that we may be the same *for others*. This is Nehemiah's gospel. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Joy creates enthusiasm, elevates above despair and opposition, and develops all our resources. As bodies expand through heat, so the soul is enlarged, and effort prompted under the genial influence of joy.

GOD'S PREPARATION.—Verse 36.

God prepares in nature and in providence. Men gradually fitted and appointed for their work. Our duty to watch and enter upon work when discovered. **I. God seen in removing difficulties in the work.** Idolatry prevalent, and nation corrupted. The people indisposed, and officials reluctant; the work itself great and perhaps thought impossible by many. **II. God seen in helping on the work to completion.** "The service of the Lord was set in order." Not only difficulties removed, but strength given to finish. If priests could not be found, Levites were ready (ver. 34). No delay, no excuse given. Early in the king's reign the work began, expeditiously was it finished, "for the thing was done suddenly." The people seen gathered together. God gave them "a free heart" and they worked willingly. "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 12-19. The thoroughness of the work done, the readiness and number of those who engaged in it, the method in which they proceeded (ver. 15), and the delights that spring from its completion.

Ver. 13. On triple division of musical Levites, see 1 Chr. xxv. 1-6; 2 Chr. v. 12. When God has a work to do, he raises up men to do it. But

first in rank and position not always fit for service and most willing to enter it.

Vers. 11, 30, 32-34. *Popular generosity and cold officialism.* The "free heart" of the people a contrast to the negligence of officials. A reflection seems to be cast upon their dilatoriness and negligence in sanctifying themselves (ch. xxx. 15), of which they

were afterwards ashamed. "Generosity may sometimes confuse officialism, so that people may sometimes get ahead of the Levites" [*Dr. Parker*]. Priests should be examples to others, never be satisfied with worldly emoluments, grossed in earthly affairs, and

forget the demands of the people and the duties of their calling. The higher the position, the greater should be the readiness to work.

"In persons grafted in a serious trust, Negligence is a crime."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXIX.

Vers. 3-7. *Door opening.* To cleanse the sanctuary is to pray. When Hezekiah opened the doors, by that very act he worshipped; when Hezekiah repaired the doors of the house of the Lord, he wrought a wondrous work upon the heart that was sore by reason of its long-continued need and painful solitude. To repair the building is to worship the living God; to give a cup of cold water to a disciple for Christ's sake is to oblige herein [*Dr. Parker*].

Vers. 10, 11. *Energy.* Energy of character has always a power to evoke energy in others. It acts through sympathy, one of the most influential of human agencies. The zealous, energetic man unconsciously carries others along with him. His example is contagious and compels imitation. He exercises a sort of electric power through every fibre—flows into the nature of those about him and makes them give out sparks of fire [*Smiles*].

Vers. 14-17. *Order.* Order is the best manager of time; for unless work is properly arranged time is lost; and once lost it is gone for ever. Order

illustrates many important subjects. Thus obedience to the moral and material law is order. Regard for the rights and obligations of all is order. Virtue is order. The world began with order, chaos prevailed before the establishment of order [*Smiles*].

Vers. 25-28. *Instruments.* Music has a most humanising effect. The cultivation of the art has a most favourable influence upon public morals. It furnishes a source of pleasure in every family. It gives home a new attraction. It makes social intercourse more cheerful. Father Mathew followed up his temperance movement by a singing movement. He promoted the establishment of musical clubs all over Ireland, for he felt that, as he had taken the people's whisky from them, he must give them some wholesome stimulus in its stead. He gave them music. Singing classes were established, to refine the taste, soften the manners, and humanise the mass of the Irish people. But we fear that the example set by Father Mathew has already been forgotten [*Smiles*].

CHAPTER XXX.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Preparations for Passover (vers. 1-12); the keeping of Passover (vers. 13-17); H.'s prayer for unclean persons (vers. 18-22); the solemnities of the second seven days.

Vers. 1-12.—*Preparations for Passover.* Sent messengers. Special letters to remote and near tribes (cf. ch. xxix. 24 for object in sending them). Ver. 2. *Second month, a time*

which allowed for purification of priests, proclamation to be made through all Israel and for absentees. Ver. 3. Other reasons assigned. *Pleased, i.e.*, arrangements made. Ver. 5. Order made and proclaimed from Dan to Beer., *i.e.*, the extent of Israel; "for they had not (for some time) kept the Passover in full numbers, as required (written) by law." Ver. 6. *Posts*, runners or bearers of letters (ch. xxiii. 1, 2). *Remnant*, portions of people had been removed by Assyrian invasions to Asshur (2 Ki. xv. 20), the rest now tributary (2 Ki. xvii. 1-4). Ver. 8. *Stiff-necked*, hardening neck (Deut. x. 16); gesture of disobedience (2 Ki. xvii. 14; Ezra x. 19; Ezek. xvii. 18). *Yield*, lit., give the hand, *i.e.*, submit (1 Chr. xxix. 24; Lam. v. 6). Ver. 9. *Find*, "shall be for compassion before your captors." Ver. 10. *Zeb.*, extreme north. Ver. 11. *Divers*, certain; representatives of five tribes sent. Ver. 12. *Hand*, direct ascription to God for united national response.

Vers. 13-17.—*The keeping of Passover.* Ver. 14. *Altars* which Abaz had erected in city (ch. xxviii. 24) partly for victims and partly for incense—a sign of earnestness. Ver. 15. *Ashamed*, behind in zeal for worship or given to idolatry, put now to blush by forwardness of people; received burnt-offerings from officers at doors of inner court, and took them to brazen altar in front of porch. Ver. 16. *Hand*, Levites being obliged to help in slaying numerous victims. Ver. 17. *Charge*, because unsanctified people could not do it themselves.

Vers. 18-22.—*His prayer for unclean.* *Otherwise, i.e.*, contrary to Mosaic rites. Ver. 19. *Prepareth*, so is sincere. Ver. 20. *Healed*, forgave (sin) uncleanness and delivered from physical or moral consequences. Ver. 21. *Seven*, according to requirement (Ex. xii. 18; xxiii. 15); *loud*, strong instruments, ascribing might to the Lord. Ver. 22. *Comfortably*, encouragingly to heart. *Confession* of past sin and keeping feast full appointed time.

Vers. 23-27.—*Solemnities of second seven days.* *Took*, resolved to imitate Solomon's feast at dedication of temple (1 Ki. viii. 65). Ver. 24. *Give*, lit., gave as heave-offering (cf. ch. xxxv. 7). *Thousand*, victims liberally offered by kings and princes, many priests sanctified themselves to overtake this extraordinary abundance. *Strangers* responded to invitation, and not such a national feast since time of Solomon (cf. Josiah's Passover, 2 Ki. xxiii. 22, 23). Ver. 27. *Blessed*, benediction of priests, who were entitled to bless, reached to heaven itself (cf. Num. vi. 24-26).

HOMILETICS.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE PASSOVER.—Verses 1-12.

Division of kingdom, disorders which followed, and prevalent idolatry prevented national observance for long time. Hezekiah desired to revive it, consulted princes and chief men, met with hearty response, and resolved to proclaim it.

I. The invitation to keep the passover. 1. *Official*, from kings and princes. 2. *Special*, by decree (ver. 5). 3. *Pressing*, by letters and proclamation. 4. *Universal*, to Israel as well as Judah. Indicating zeal, generosity, and love. 5. *Timely*, though temple, priests, and people not duly sanctified by 14th day of first month Nisan. Yet only postponed till 14th day of second month, not a whole year. **II. The motives to comply with this invitation.** In passionate language he urges personal obedience and ready response. 1. *Their covenant relation urged them.* God forsaken, though "the Lord God of their fathers" and "the Lord their God." 2. *Their present condition urged them.* Trans-Jordanic region desolate. Two tribes in captivity would find compassion from their captors (Ps. evi. 46), and God would return unto the remnant. 3. *If they complied God would be gracious.* "Gracious and merciful, &c." (ver. 9). His fierce wrath would be turned away if they sought him (Joel ii. 13). 4. *If they refused God would be angry.* **III. The response which was given to the invitation.** A twofold reception. 1. Some were *ready and willing*. "Divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." "In Judah" God's power seen in zeal and unanimity of people. 2. Others *mocked and insulted*. Not merely refused, but openly derided. "Laughed them to scorn." A type of gospel message, "a savour of life unto life or of death unto death." Which to you? Neutrality impossible. Are you refusing or yielding? "They mocked the messengers of

God and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

HEZEKIAH'S INVITATION.—*Verses 1-12.*

Hezekiah determined to keep passover not in selfish spirit within narrow limits of Judah or Jerusalem, but commanded "that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for *all Israel*." In this we learn—**I. The centre of unity for all God's people.** "The house of the Lord." The sanctuary the centre round which all Israel should gather. Through Jeroboam's act three centres, Jerusalem, Bethel, and Dan. Hezekiah pointed out one. "Turn again to the Lord God of your fathers." Not places of worship, cities of refuge, creeds or denominations, but Christ the centre and bond of unity. One Lord, one table, one object. **II. The method of securing this unity.** 1. *Cherish and cultivate a spirit of love.* Hezekiah not cold and exclusive, thought not of his own people merely, but of those in connection with him. Too much sectarianism and bigotry separate true believers one from another and repel the world. 2. *By personal effort endeavour to bring it about.* Discouragement everything that promotes separation. Encourage and incite in minds of all Christians a desire to be found together. Not the purpose of God that his people should be "scattered abroad" in bitter feelings, sectarian feuds, and selfish actions. Working to secure the unity of the body, we co-operate with God for a divine object. That "he should gather together *in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad."

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE PASSOVER.—*Verses 13-26.*

I. At an unusual though legal time. "In the second month." "At that time" (in the first month, ch. xxix. 3), they could not keep passover, because priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people assembled. King and princes consulted not to delay another year, but to hold it second month. Zeal of people might cool down. Present benefit desired. Let circumstances give way to realities. Never neglect a greater for a smaller good. **II. By an unprecedented number of victims.** Hezekiah gave a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep. The princes gave a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep. These besides the stock of sacrificial animals brought by the people which soon were exhausted. Pious example should ever incite. Rich will never be poorer for genuine liberality. **III. By the great numbers who attended.** Some refused, but others gladly observed passover. All Judah with priests and Levites, some from Israel, the northern kingdom, and strangers—probably proselytes from both Judah and Israel. "A very great congregation" (ver. 13), to whom God's arm was revealed (Is. liii. 1), and who were made willing in the day of God's power. No passover like this since the great festival of Solomon, which lasted fourteen days, for excess of Levitical zeal, unbounded joy, and extent of duration.

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.—*Verses 18-20.*

Passover kept, but remarkable is the description, "otherwise than it was written." Many involved in ceremonial or moral uncleanness, and unfit to slay their own lambs; needed intercession of the king, who proved himself to be a true ruler and a true priest for the people. Learn—**I. That purity of heart is required for sanctuary worship.** Outward cleansing of

Old Testament a symbol of inward. Truth in the inward parts, sincerity of heart and mind needful. Worship is not sensual, but a living fellowship with Christ; for this, preparation must be made. "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him, &c." (Job xi. 13). **II. That the best preparation in sanctuary worship is defective.** Not what law requires, not up to spiritual ideal, "according to the purification of the sanctuary." Iniquity cleaves to our holy things, and "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." Best offerings, holiest worshippers unworthy—need the intercession, the incense of the great High-Priest. **III. That when the heart is sincere God will hear prayer.** God is *Jehovah the good*, kind and merciful; proclaiming goodness in forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Prayer to Him will be heard. "And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah." God ever condescending to the upright in shortcomings and defects. But this no excuse for negligence in preparation, for reliance upon duty performed as well as we can perform it, nor any ground for despair on account of weakness or imperfection. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

A SECOND JOYFUL MONTH.—Verses 23-26.

A voluntary service made in addition to requirements of law, a fruit and sign of abundant zeal and gladness. This illustrates—**I. The true method of deliverance from sectarianism.** No form prescribed. Law not exactly obeyed. The sweetness of unity in decided hostility to separation, idolatry, and narrow-mindedness. Hospitality warmed, the nation enthusiastic and one; numbers grow, and pardon multiplies at the feast. **II. The true principle of all reformation.** Not to pull down what is *false*, but to build up what is *true*. Assemble Israel round the altar, lead them into the presence of the God of their fathers; then a mighty power will go forth from Jerusalem to sweep the land from idols, upset the seats of superstition, and confirm righteous works. Not to resuscitate fallen religion by novel measures, to promote excitement, and raise up a denomination, but to return to appointed means, regularly, orderly, and reverently observe divine worship, and restore to freedom and efficiency old institutions by which God will raise the Church and bless the nation. **III. The only way to secure service out of worship.** "When all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces," &c. (ch. xxxi. 1). Altars not destroyed in going up to Jerusalem. They needed the experience of the feast, the blessings of worship. Hezekiah began with God in sanctuary, Israel pursued the same order. Power to reform and execute judgment derived from God's presence. Luther and Knox prayerful in closet, therefore successful in reform. "Not by might, &c."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 14-17. *Removal of altars.* 1. *Destruction after construction.* Evil taken away before good accomplished. 2. *Official lukewarmness to remove evil.* Its widespread and its future end. 3. *Personal revival to stir up others.*

Vers. 18-20. *Hez.'s prayer.* 1. Sin brings sickness. Ceremonial uncleanness exposure to danger. In conse-

quence of transgression they had cause to fear physical and moral disease (Lev. xv. 31). 2. God the physician. Will heal this moral sickness. "The Lord *healed* and restored to penitence and health." This revealed probably by a prophet (*cf.* 2 Ki. xix. 20; xx. 5).

Ver. 22. *Hez.'s encouragement to Levites.* Work holy and great. Unity

and resources of all to accomplish it. Hence "H. spake comfortably." I. *Qualifications required.* (a) Knowledge, good and extensive, ritual and musical. (b) Wisdom to execute and consecrate it to God's service. (c) Humility before God. "Knowledge is proud because she knows so much, wisdom humble because she knows no more." II. *The advantages of possessing these qualifications.* (a) Ability to encourage others. (b) Facility to arrange and conduct public worship.

Vers. 1-27. Reviewing whole, we have—I. *A revival of theocratic spirit.* II. *Destruction of idolatrous customs.* III. *Establishment of true unity in public worship.* IV. *A pattern reformation*, in its benevolent design, in the spirit in which it was conducted, and in the priestly blessing it secured. Benedictions fell from lips of leaders, praises of the people ascended to heaven, the nation restored to God "and great joy."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXX.

Vers. 1-12. *Zeal* ("My sons, be not negligent") should be inspired by principles, not by circumstances. Yet the value of circumstances must not be underrated, for they are means which God employs to awaken our attention to duty. It is not difficult to trace the course of events through which the dying embers of religious zeal, and especially of zeal for Christian missions, have been kindled by the breath of God. We may not overlook the happy results from the commanding influences of leading men and the powerful impressions produced on the lethargy into which the public mind is ever sinking, by the stirring appeals of pulpit, platform, and press. By such means it has pleased God, in a degree, to conquer public opinion, and they must continue to be plied with unabating energy till the conquest is complete [*W. H. Stowel, D.D.*].

Ver. 22. *Confession.*

"What better can we do than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate
fall

Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg with
tears" [*Milton*].

Vers. 23-27. *Universal joy.* I am not unmindful of the assertion that the God of the Hebrews is usually thought of as a Being of preternatural severity, overwhelming men by his majesty, begetting profound and soul-filling awe by his greatness, dwelling in the thick darkness, making clouds his chariot, and sweeping down on his foes like a cyclone. But this representation is one-sided and unfair to a religion which had more festivals than fasts, more psalms than prophecies, and more triumphs than despairs. By the side of intolerance of sin there is mercy that reacheth to the very heavens, and near to the righteousness that is like the great mountains there is a forgiveness that inspires hopeful petition, even out of depth of sufferings and misfortune [*Dr. J. Clifford*].

CHAPTER XXXI.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Destruction of idolatry (ver. 1); H. appoints courses and contributions (vers. 2-10); and arranges the chambers and officers (vers. 11-21).

Ver. 1.—*Idol destroyed* (cf. 2 Ki. xviii. 4). After festival, all Judah and Benj., i.e. from southern kingdom; in *Eph. and Man.*, i.e., in northern kingdom. *Images, statues of Baal; groves, stocks representing Ashtaroth* (xiv. 3); *utterly destroyed, had made an end.*

Vers. 2-10.—II. appoints courses and contributions. Courses as appointed by David (1 Chr. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 1). *The tents, i.e.,* within the gates (precincts) of the Temple. Ver. 3. *King's portion.* H. set example in giving tithes (*cf.* ch. xxxii. 27-29 for what possession consisted). Ver. 4. *Portion.* Having set example, people called to do their part. *Priests, i.e.,* first-fruits (Num. xviii. 12-18) and tithe (*ib.* 21-24); *encouraged, i.e.,* that they, priests and Levites, might devote themselves wholly to their proper work, the service of sanctuary and teaching of God's law (ch. xvii. 7-9), and not engage in secular occupations (*cf.* Neh. xiii. 10-14) [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 5. Improved state of feeling stirred up to generosity; *honey* (dates), and *tithes* brought from Israel in Jerusalem. Others (ver. 6) in country districts brought first-fruits and tithe of sheep and oxen; *heaps* upon heaps. Ver. 7. *Seventh month,* which completed the harvesting. Ver. 9. *Questioned.* Whether all he saw was sufficient to maintain priests and Levites. Ver. 10. *Azar.,* possibly A. of ch. xxvi. 17; replied that there was enough, and that the people were grateful to Jehovah for his goodness.

Vers. 11-20.—II. provides store-chambers and officers. Chambers (storehouses) always among rooms (1 Ki. vi. 5) or among outer buildings attached to courts. But disused of late years, required to be prepared afresh. *Faithfully,* acting carefully and honestly, not appropriating for common use (ch. xix. 9). *Shimei* (ch. xxix. 14). Ver. 13. *Jehiel and Mah.* (ch. xxix. 14). Ver. 14. *Doorkeeper* toward east (1 Chr. ix. 18); *freewill, i.e.,* voluntary offerings to God (Deut. xii. 17); *holy things,* portion of sin-offerings, which had to be eaten by priests in a holy place (Lev. vi. 10-22; vii. 6). Ver. 15. Six Levites situated in cities of priests to distribute to priestly families, old or young, great or small, their due share of temple offerings. Those at Jerusalem obtained their share at the temple. Ver. 17. "The writer here proceeds to state nature of lists which guided officers who made distributions. Three enumerated—one of priests made out according to families; one of Levites, including all above twenty years of age, and made out according to courses; and a third of priestly and Levitical families, containing wives, sons, and daughters of both priests and Levites indiscriminately [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 19. *In fields,* not even country priests and Levites neglected.

Vers. 20, 21.—Hez.'s thoroughness. Good acting as servant of Jehovah; integrity and benevolence attested. *All his heart,* a perfect heart (*cf.* ch. xix. 9; 2 Ki. xx. 3; Is. xxxviii. 3).

HOMILETICS.

A POPULAR MOVEMENT.—Verse 1.

Many indications in this history that the power of Hebrew kings over people was not so arbitrary as that of Eastern monarchs in general. Here the people began a movement, a revival, which ended in destruction of high places, and establishment of one form of worship. **I. The enthusiasm from which it sprang.** Not mere excitement, not violence and tumult, but holy fervour. Iconoclasm came from religious enthusiasm; inspiration from God (*en* and *theo*). Different from the wild fanaticism of heathen gods. All reform from deep religious conviction, from real intercourse with God. The heart must be filled before the hand can strike. **II. The extent to which it reached.** Jerusalem cleansed before Passover, and all signs of idolatry removed. Now the land had to be purged. In the northern and southern kingdoms the movement spread. Amendment must begin in the *heart* first, the centre and source of action; outward sins may be forsaken, and the heart unrenewed. "Cleanse your heart," and then "make your ways and your doings good." **III. The thoroughness with which it was finished.** They began and made a complete finish; did not give up, nor act partially, "all was finished." Destruction entire. "Statues" broken in pieces, "the groves cut down." "High places," time-honoured centres removed; "altars," and all remnants of idolatry, "utterly destroyed." Every evil must be forsaken, no sin spared through favour or affection. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" **IV. The national peace which resulted from its completion.** "Then the children of Israel returned," &c. Though long absent, they could not return and feel secure, "every man in his possession," until images were destroyed. Idols no longer their gods and defence. They

returned to Him from whom they had deeply revolted. "For in that day every man cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which his own hands had made unto him for a sin" (Is. xxxi. 7 ; ii. 20).

HEZEKIAH ESTABLISHES ORDERLY PERFORMANCE OF TEMPLE WORSHIP.—
Verses 2-10.

II. now turns attention to public worship, suspension of which had disarranged the courses appointed by David, which were intended to relieve each other in perpetual succession (I Chron. xxiii. 6 ; xxiv. 1). **I. The arrangement of priests and Levites in courses.** The order settled afresh in which they should undertake their parts of service. Every man found his work, put into his place, and made to contribute to the whole. "Levites after their courses ;" priests "for burnt-offerings and for peace-offerings," and Levites to "minister" to priests, or "give thanks and praise." But place, time, and position nothing without heart. They must represent the man himself. Allegiance to God inspires worship, and worship inspires and sanctions duty. No motives so strong and overpowering as those which worship kindles and sustains ; self-approbation, self-respect, regard for esteem of others fail to take hold of conscience and life. Faith in the ever-present God, actual communion with the Father of Spirits, will create homage in worship, and faithfulness in sanctuary work. **II. The commands for payment of dues from the people.** When every one had his proper place assigned him, an edict was issued for the regular payment of dues for revenues of the temple. 1. *The king set an example.* Contributions from privy purse and royal estate to defray expenses of altar. A generous act, honouring God, and relieving his people ; after the example of David and Solomon before him (ch. viii. 14 ; I Ki. ix. 25). Kings not exempt ; may be noble examples of liberality and duty to their subjects. 2. *The people responded to the call.* Formerly the sacred tribute entirely neglected or withheld by the people because misappropriated by idolatrous princes ; now improved state of public feeling prompts to ready compliance. First-fruits and tithes poured in from all parts of Judah and Israel, which astonished the king, proved sufficient for the priests, and expressed gratitude to God, whose law was obeyed (*cf.* Ex. xxiii. 19 ; Num. xviii. 21), who had crowned the year with his goodness and mercy. Loyal hearts secure liberal contributions ; liberal contributions will secure God's blessing. "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour (empty) you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

HEZEKIAH'S PROVISION OF STORE CHAMBERS.—*Verses 11-19.*

I. Chambers were prepared. Storehouses, granaries, or cellars. Old ones had fallen into decay and needed repairing or fresh ones built. Tithes and offerings not left exposed in heaps and disorder, liable to be wasted or taken away, but preserved, consecrated to right use. People encouraged when their contributions are well received and properly used. **II. Officers were appointed to distribute stores.** Officers chosen for different departments, and distribution made "by courses" according to three lists of priestly families. 1. *Impartial* distribution. "As well to the great as to the small." Those near, in actual attendance (ver. 17), and those "in the fields of the suburbs" were not overlooked (ver. 19). 2. *Conscientious* distribution. "One list of priests made out according to families ; one of Levites, including all above

twenty years of age, and made out according to courses; and a third of priestly and Levitical families containing wives, sons, and daughters of both priests and Levites indiscriminately." "They sanctified themselves," conscientiously devoted themselves to their duties, "in their (trust) set office," in confidence of support, and were not disappointed. "Attend to my duties," said Queen Elizabeth to a courtier, "and I will attend to thy wants."

HEZEKIAH'S THOROUGHNESS IN GOD'S SERVICE.—*Verses 20 and 21.*

Other kings good, did right as Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, and Amaziah, but fell away from God. Hezekiah remained firm to the last, and prospered in all things. **I. The work he performed.** He displayed qualities of a constitutional sovereign, restored cities and institutions of the land, and gained renown equal to his predecessors. His work summarised—1. In temple service. 2. "In the law." 3. "In the commandments." **II. The spirit in which he performed it.** 1. A spirit of *impartiality*. Not religious merely at home and in the temple, but before his people, "throughout all Judah." 2. A spirit of *integrity*. He was faithful to God like Abraham, and could appeal to divine justice. He "wrought that which was good, and right, and truth before the Lord his God." 3. A *spirit of zeal*. "He did it with all his heart," a heart filled with earnestness and sincerity, and not shared or swayed with rival deities (1 Ki. xi. 4). **III. The blessing of God which followed its performance.** "And prospered." In expeditions and in all undertakings "the Lord was with him." He had enormous wealth, shared in authority over northern kingdom, and had great influence over surrounding nations (*cf.* 2 Ki. xviii. 7; 2 Chr. xxxii. 22–29). Regard to God's glory will secure honour here and reward hereafter.

The text speaks of work. Only adopt Hezekiah's plan, and "in every work that you begin to do with all your heart, you may prosper." **I.** We learn from Hezekiah a lesson of concentration of energy. He did not begin half a dozen things at once, and drive his energy away upon them; he did not commence one thing till he had finished another. **II.** Method and punctuality, too, seem to be indirectly hinted at in the text, and they are almost indispensable to prosperity. **III.** But the great lesson we learn from the text is the value of *thoroughness* in doing whatever we undertake with our whole heart and doing it well. Do nothing as if it were trifling; if it be so, it is unworthy of you. **IV.** Emulate Hezekiah's ardent and consistent piety. He stands in the front rank among the saints of Scripture as a man of prayer. Every difficulty and trouble he took straight to God, and spread it out before Him [*J. Thain Davidson*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Religion at home.* Well to attend public worship, but "show piety at home." 1. Not in temples and cathedrals, churches and chapels, in ritual and forms. 2. Not at feasts, in excitement, numbers, and haste. 3. Not in organisations and agencies. In quietness and domestic duty; before friends and your own family. Display the good received in ordinances in the strength and example of home. "Go home to thy friends and tell them how

great things the Lord hath done for thee."

Ver. 2. Gates of the tent—lit., the camps of the Lord. *Jehovah's camp.* "Fily compared to a camp, for the watch and ward there kept by the priests, and for the convention of the people thither, as to their rendezvous, to pray, which is the chief service of our spiritual warfare" [*Trapp*]. 1. Its orderly arrangements. 2. Its sure defences. 3. Its enlisted tribes.

IV. Its central worship. V. Its great commander.

Vers. 2-5. *Priestly maintenance.*
 1. Due from all those near the temple at Jerusalem, those in cities of Judah.
 2. Due according to the law of God.
 3. Due that they might devote themselves entirely to their proper work, the service of the sanctuary and the exposition of the law, and not engage

in secular occupations (*cf.* Neh. xiii. 10-14).

Ver. 8. *They blessed the Lord.* The source of all good. 1. For a bountiful year. 2. For disposition to consecrate its gifts. 3. For abundance which is left (ver. 10). Nothing should be wasted, only right use of everything brings blessings.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXXI.

Ver. 1. *Reform.* Men cannot strike finally if they only act as reformers. Reform is an active word, and is to be regarded with great favour, and is the only word that is permissible under some circumstances; but the greater word is regeneration. Reform that does not point to regeneration is a waxen flower that will melt when the sun is well up in the heavens. It is not in man to regenerate, therefore; this is the mystery of God's action in the soul. When the man is new the action will be new. The great process does not begin with the action, but with the soul. Make the tree good, then the fruit will be good [*Dr. Parker*].

Vers. 2-10. *Service maintained.* This careful and bountiful provision is painfully deficient in present church economics, but manifestly essential to liberal and cheerful giving. No rate of giving to God, short of sacrifice, is worthy of those who are redeemed by the priceless sacrifice of a Saviour's blood, or is adequate to the vast requirements of a ruined world [*J. Ross*].

Vers. 20, 21. *All his heart.* Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and his gospel which is nothing else than our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love [*Gud-worth*]. *Prosperity.* Hezekiah "prospered." God walks with the good man. God rewards enthusiasm. We do not throw our divinely-inspired passion away to a cold, selfish world. Our passion may appear to be frenzy, enthusiasm, insanity, but the reply is before us, we can return to it, and if we can return with a sound heart, blessed are we; then we can say with moral emphasis, If we be beside ourselves it is to God. May we understand what it is to eat the passover, and having eaten it, to rise with moral dignity, that we may smite every unholy thing and go about our whole business with a united heart, expecting the blessing of God which created the enthusiasm daily to sustain its holy fury [*Dr. Parker*].

CHAPTER XXXII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] Sen. invades Israel (vers. 1-5); H.'s preparations to meet him (vers. 6-8); Sen.'s seductions (vers. 9-15); Sen.'s letter (vers. 16-20); destruction of Assyrian host (vers. 21-26); end and reign of Hez. (vers. 27-33). *Cf.* parallel account in 2 Ki. xviii. 13, xix. 37, and Is. xxxvi. and xxxvii.

Vers. 1-5.—*Sen. invades Israel.* After, i.e., 14th year of Hez. (2 Ki. xviii. 13). *Estab.*, 201

faithfulness or truth on part of Hez. *Sen.*, Sanherib (Sin-ahi-ir-ba of Assyrian inscriptions), son and successor of Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser and conqueror of Samaria. *He in*, break into them. Ver. 2. *Purposed* to fight, face was for war (*cf.* ch. xx. 3; Lu. ix. 53). Ver. 3. *Counsel* (*cf.* xxx. 2). *Stop*, not wholly, but cover them over (Luther, *cover*), to hide them and to convey water underground for his own supply in siege (*cf.* Ecclus. xlviii. 17). Ver. 4. *Brook*, Gihon, brook of valley of Ben-hinnom (*cf.* ver. 30; 2 Ki. xx. 22). *Kings*, mighty men. Ver. 5. *Strengthened*, made careful inspection of city defences, renewed the masonry, raised projecting machines to the towers, and specially fortified Millo, the lower portion of city.

Vers. 6-8.—*His preparations*. Gathered them in large open space. *Comfortably*, to their heart, inspiring courage and confidence (xxx. 22). Ver. 7. *More with us* (*cf.* 2 Ki. xx. 16). Ver. 8. *Arm of flesh*, designates human weakness (*cf.* Is. xxxi. 3; Jer. xvii. 5; Ps. lvi. 5). *Fight* (1 Sam. viii. 20; xviii. 17). *Rested*, leaned.

Vers. 9-15.—*Sen. seduces the people*. After this. Hez.'s submission (2 Ki. xviii. 14-16) omitted and the second expedition given. *Lachish* approached (*cf.* xxv. 27). *Power*, all his sovereignty with him (*cf.* Is. xxxiv. 1). *Judah* (2 Ki. xviii. 27, and ver. 18). Ver. 10. *In siege*, in straitness (marg., fortress) (*cf.* 2 Ki. xxv. 2; Ezek. iv. 7). Jer. not besieged, but in distress and straitened for supplies. Ver. 11. *Persuade*, urge you to destruction. Ver. 12. (*cf.* 2 Ki. xviii. 22). *One altar*. "A more distinct reference to exclusive validity of worship in temple, which had been once more established by Hez." [Keil]. Misconception of religious reforms natural to a heathen. Ver. 13. *Fathers*, ancestors. *People*, mentioned 2 Ki. xviii. 35 (*cf.* Is. x. 8-11; xxxvi. 20; xxxvii. 11-13). Ver. 15. *No God*, in addition to reviling God of Israel, and he adds no god of any nation and kingdom can rescue from him. Ver. 15. *Servants*, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh the spokesman (2 Ki. xviii. 19-35).

Vers. 16-20.—*Sen.'s insulting letters*. *Letter*, in plural referring to characters in which written [Murphy], or used as often of a single document [*Speak. Com.*] (*cf.* 2 Ki. xix. 14). Facts co-ordinated in real sequence, not temporal. First speech, then letter, and lastly demand. Ver. 18. *Cried*, to produce panic. Ver. 19. *Against gods* (2 Ki. xix. 18), classifying Jehovah among them. Ver. 20. H.'s prayer given 2 Ki. xix. 15-19.

Vers. 21-23.—*Destruction of Assyrian host*. *Angel* (2 Ki. xix. 35). *Mighty men*, common soldiers (as xvii. 14) in distinction from leaders and princes. *Came forth*, his own sons (2 Ki. xviii. 37). Ver. 22. *From hand*, guarded, sustained (Gen. xlvii. 17), "gave them rest—round about." Ver. 23. *Presents*, precious things (xvii. 10; xx. 29).

Vers. 24-33.—*Remaining history of Hez.* Sickness described in full in 2 Ki. xx. 1-11; and Is. xxxviii. *Sign*, going back of shadow on dial. Ver. 25. *Lifted* up in pride, in display of treasures (2 Ki. xx. 13). Ver. 26. *Wrath*, rebuked by Is., humbled himself (2 Ki. xx. 17, 18). Ver. 27. *Riches*, personal estates in land and agricultural produce; accumulated treasures as silver and gold (*cf.* 2 Ki. xx. 13; Is. xxxix. 2), cattle for stalls, &c. Ver. 30. *Stopped*, upper sources of Gihon. *Down*, underground. This noticed as a great act of Hez. Ver. 31. *Business*, interpreters from Babylon, where astronomy was cultivated, greatly interested and sent on embassy. *Wonder*, *i.e.*, going back of shadow. *Try* (*cf.* Deut. viii. 2). Ver. 32. *Goodness*, good deeds (Neh. xiii. 14). *Vision*, "title given by Is. to his prophecy (Is. i. 1)." *Chiefest*, highest, an excavation above all other tombs—in same repository, but at higher level—intended by some, others that no room in family sepulchres, and a private tomb constructed for him and successors. *Honour*, the burning of spices (*cf.* xvi. 14; xxi. 19).

HOMILETICS.

SENNACHERIB'S ATTEMPT ON JERUSALEM.—Verses 1-26.

In the spring or early summer of 701 B.C., S. marched his forces to reduce rebellious vassals to submission. Sidon and Phœnician cities were taken and reduced, and bordering kings rendered homage. He climbed the lofty heights of Lebanon (2 Ki. xix. 23), and "passed along the banks of the streams, which he drained by his armies, or over which he threw bridges for them to cross" (Is. xxxvii. 24, 25, LXX). He was renowned far and wide as the destroyer. His chief object not Palestine but Egypt, the only rival worthy of his arms. Useless to take Lachish, with the strong fortress of Jerusalem in rear. Each stage of march foreseen, all intervening obstacles swept away. Fenced cities of Judah taken, Zion alone remained. Hezekiah counselled to

submit and pay tribute, was shut up in the city, and determined to resist. The invading army reached the city, "and passed in long defile under the walls. Chariots and horses filled the ravines, scarlet dresses and scarlet shields blazed in the sun, and the veil of the city was torn away. The general, accompanied by high personages, made demands for unconditional surrender" [see *Stanley*, vol. ii. *Jew. Ch.*].

I. Sennacherib's design. "He was purposed to fight against Jerusalem." 1. *By craft he seeks to withdraw the people from allegiance to Hezekiah.* (a) He will lead them into danger. "To give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst" (ver. 11). (b) He has excited divine displeasure by removing high places. Hezekiah's reforms ridiculed. He could not expect help from Jehovah, the national Guardian or tutelary Deity, for he had forfeited favour by his sacrilegious conduct in demolition of sanctuaries. But Hezekiah designed not to exterminate, only to promote worship of God. (c) His forces will only lead you to ruin (ver. 15). If local gods of those powerful nations could not deliver people from might of Assyria, how improbable, impossible for the god of so small a state to deliver them? A contradiction to his boast in 2 Ki. xviii. 25, and a heathenish view of Jehovah. 2. *By blasphemy he misrepresents Jehovah.* He is put on a level with other gods, "the gods of the nations." He is declared impotent to deliver those who trust in him. "So shall not the God of Hez. deliver his people" (ver. 17). "The boastful and blasphemous tone of this chaff's speech, which, in the concluding part of it, here reaches its climax. He spoke of Jehovah as a heathen, and as the representative of a despot whose head was turned by his hitherto unbroken course of conquests" (*Jam. on 2 Ki. xviii. 33-35*). 3. *By self-exaltation he becomes insulting.* A towering pride exalted him above all authority, human and divine. "Had not Asshur's deity proved himself, by the capture of Samaria, to be mightier than Israel's! Only one more evidence of this was needed—the capture of Jerusalem—and then the King of Assyria was undisputed lord of the world" [*Speak. Com.*].

II. Hezekiah's preparations to meet this design. "H. responded to the call. By a sustained effort, which gave him a peculiar renown (Ecclus. xlvi. 17) as a second founder or restorer of the city of David. 1. He stopped the two springs of Siloam, and diverted the waters of the Kedron, which, unlike its present dry state, and unusually even for that time, had been flooding its banks, and in this way the besiegers, he hoped, would be cut off from all water on the barren hills around. 2. He also fortified the walls, and rebuilt the towers, which had probably not been repaired on the north side since the assault of Joash, King of Israel, and completed the armoury and outworks of the castle or fortress of Milo. 3. He assembled the people in the great square or open place before the city gate, and there, with his officers, nobles, and guards, addressed them in a spirit which, combined with his active preparations, reminds us of the like combination in the well-known speech of Cromwell. 'And the people rested on the words of H., King of Judah.' Well might any nation repose on one to whom even now the world may turn as a signal of what is meant by faith, as distinct from fanaticism" [*Stanley*].

III. Sennacherib's failure to accomplish his design. Measures of Rab. entirely ineffectual. Troops at his disposal not sufficient to enforce submission. He was obliged to report to his royal master unsuccessful mission. His second demand unavailing. H. spread defiant letter before Jehovah, who intervened to fulfil his word and answer prayer. "The skilled strategy of the Assyrian will avail him no more; his past career has been in accordance with the purposes of Providence, but his appointed bound has at length been reached. Hope still remains for the 'remnant' of Judah. 'By the way that he come, by the same shall he return, and unto this city he shall not come, saith Jehovah.' That night the long series of Isaiah's predictions received its fulfilment—the flower of the Assyrian army was cut off and the Assyrian monarch 'heard the

amour' which impelled his return to his own land" [*Driver on Isaiah*]. He "decamped, departed, returned, remained at Nineveh" (Is. xxxvii. 37, 38). Worshipping without attendants, the once triumphant conqueror in humiliation sought the help of his own special god, but was slain by his own sons.

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold"

[*Byron's Heb. Melody*]

SENNACHERIB'S LETTER.—Verses 17-20.

Hez.'s letter different in form from our letters. Assyrians did not use paper or even skins, but wrote on clay. It is very likely the letter was a tablet of terra-cotta. I. "Went up into the house of the Lord" (*cf.* 2 Kings xix. 14). Where so likely to find God as in his house? Notice how he speaks of God dwelling between the cherubim. Perhaps he had heard how Sen. sat on his throne between winged bulls and lions; but he heard Isaiah tell of seeing the Lord surrounded by winged intelligences. God has only to speak to his winged messenger and the angel goes to crush the foes of his people. This was a model prayer, not going all round the world, but fastening on the thing wanted, and asking for that. If our prayers were more like telegrams we should have speedier answers. II. Was the letter ever answered? Yes, Jehovah answered it himself. We know what the result was, and how soon the bolt of vengeance struck down the proud blasphemer. III. There is a postscript to God's answer. "It came to pass that night . . . they were all dead corpses." Suppose we read in the newspaper to-morrow, "Sudden death of 185,000 soldiers!" What a stir it would make! What a sight the camp must have been next morning! There has been considerable discussion as to the cause of the destruction of so large an army, and it is generally understood now to have been the simoon. Cambyses, King of the Medes, lost fifty thousand men by one of these dreadful winds. But whether the wind was a messenger or an angel, it matters not. God willed it, and nature hastened to do his bidding [*T. Champness, "New Coins, &c."*].

ASSAULTS ON CHRISTIAN FAITH.—Verses 9-15.

The Rabshakeh's plausible speech and Jerusalem's faith, greatly distressed by him, are typical. Still as men hang moodily over the bulwarks of Zion, doubtful whether life is worth living within the narrow limits which religion prescribes, or righteousness worth fighting for with such privations and hope deferred, comes upon them some elegant and plausible temptation, loudly calling to give the whole thing up. Disregarding the official evidences and arguments that push forward to parley, it speaks home in practical tones to men's real selves—their appetites and selfishness. "You are foolish fellows," it says, "to confine yourselves to such narrowness of life and self-denial! The fall of your faith is only a matter of time; other creeds have gone, yours must follow, and why fight the world for the sake of an idea, or from the habits of discipline? Such things only starve the human spirit; and the world is so generous, so free to every one, so tolerant of each enjoying his own, unhampered by authority or religion" [*G. A. Smith, Bk. of Is.*]. Notice—**I. The unwarrantable assumption of unbelief.** Rab.'s address a type of modern criticism, the forces of culture and unbelief, with lofty pretensions, patronising airs, and deceitful promises, designed to shake confidence in religion, create confusion in Christian communities, and seduce from Christ. 1. *In displays of immense self-confidence.* Hezekiah never styled a *king*. Rab.'s master was destined to conquer. This an occasion for self-glorification. Jerusalem's defenders underrated. The city to

be captured by clever speeches. More in Christianity than human wisdom and power. It can never be hindered, destroyed by craft, worldly policy, or worldly wisdom. 2. *It seeks to undermine religious faith.* Honouring and commending and then trampling it under foot. God only on a level with idols. Christianity only one form among many. Faith is held in risks and ignoble sacrifice. Your system has had its day, is becoming effete, and its decay only a matter of time. Predictions which have been, and may again be falsified. 3. *It offers false liberty.* "Make a treaty with me, and come out to me, and eat every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, &c." (Is. xxxvi. 12). "A subtle assault upon the companionship, discipline, and patriotism of the common soldiers by the promises of a selfish, sensuous equality and individualism." An independent easy life offered to men who throw off allegiance to God, and restraints of Christian faith. But no philosopher, sceptic, or unbeliever can ensure freedom from starvation in unbelief, and captivity in the tolerance of the world. **II. The defence of faith.** "If faith be held simply as the silent garrison of Jerusalem held it, faith in a Lord God of righteousness, who has given us a conscience to serve him, and has spoken to us in plain explanation of this by those whom we can see, understand, and trust, not only by an Isaiah, but by a Jesus, then neither mere cleverness nor the ability to promise comfort can avail against our faith" [*Smith*, Bk. of Is.]. 1. *Their representations are false.* Zion is not endangered. Our God is greater than all other gods, worthy of trust and service. Liberty and satisfaction not given in unbelief, enemies themselves being witness. Our religion not likely to decay, has recuperative power, and is destined to triumph over all. What faith makes such heroes and philanthropists, gives such happiness in life, such hope in death? 2. *Faith in God is reasonable.* He is omnipotent, supreme Ruler, and ever present with his people. His word is fulfilled by his providence. No home, no freedom away from him. Unbelief is exile. In his palace, obedient to his law, and standing by his people will be found our security and peace. Well might Isaiah exclaim on the morning of the night of destruction to the Assyrian army, "Jehovah is our Judge; Jehovah is our Lawgiver; Jehovah is our King: He saveth us."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 6-8. *Hez.'s Exhortation.* 1. Numbers no guarantee of success. "All the multitude with him" availed not. "Not by might, nor by power, &c." 2. Worldly policy and shrewdness will not ensure success. These combined in largest measure have failed thousands of times. 3. Unlimited resources of all kinds—men, money, or influence—will not give success against right and God. All "an arm of flesh," and what "an arm of flesh" multiplied a million times when measured with the single arm of omnipotence! 4. God alone can give victory. "With us is the Lord our God." "The import of 'Immanuel;' by which name Christ now began to be known amongst them" [*Trapp*]. God (*a*) greater than numbers, "more with us than with him;"

(*b*) pledged to help, "to help us and to fight our battles." Hence be more anxious about the justice of your cause and God's presence to help it on, than its popularity and favourable circumstances. Exercise confidence in God and speak comfortably to those in his service. He that "feareth the fury of the oppressor forgetteth the Lord his Maker."

Ver. 9. In demand of Sen. he seems —1. Unchecked by moral obligation. Would not be satisfied with payment of tribute from Hez. "He hath broken the covenant." 2. Unchecked by fear of military defences, "despised cities." 3. Unchecked by respect for human life, "regardeth not men" (Is. xxxiii. 8). "Sen., like Napoleon in that terrible Russian expedition of 1812, had essayed

a task he was unable to complete. The Assyrians had no conception of benefiting or civilising the nations which they conquered; their activity was a purely destructive one; their only motive was ambition and lust of dominion. And now in pursuing the same objectless career they were meditating the extermination of a nation whose preservation was vital to the future of humanity. The Assyrian, though he knows it not, is an instrument in the hand of Providence; he has a mission to execute by the limits of which his pretensions must be bounded" [*Driver*].

Vers. 10-15. *Wherein your trust?* A most important question for all. 1. Hez. trusted to Egypt; a bruised reed, slender and easily broken. Weakened by Saragon, Egypt failed to help. Resolutions of amendment, self-righteousness, and vague hopes of God's mercy broken reeds. 2. God the only ground of trust. Well when sinners are roused by this question. Wisdom to trust in God, for he can and will deliver. 3. The test of this trust, "If

ye say unto me, &c." (ver. 22). "Thus he thinks to beat them off all their holds that he may bring them to the bent of his bow. Satan doth the like, 'whom resist steadfast in the faith'" [*Trapp*].

I. What accusations here made: (1) that Hez. had forfeited their allegiance and God's protection by his reforms (ver. 12); (2) that Hez.'s God only like other gods, and could not deliver him. II. What scenes of desolation here pictured. Nations conquered, gods in captivity at Nineveh, and everywhere turned into a desert. III. What assumptions of pride, power, and profanity.

Ver. 20. *The Wonderful Prayer Meeting.* Its purpose. Its attendants (Is. and Hez., "Where two or three"). Its grand results. "The issue was as momentous as any that have been determined by the 'decisive battles of the world.' It was a crisis as grave as when Persia threatened to intercept the rising civilisation of Greece, or Vandal and Moor to destroy the Christianity of Europe" [*Driver's Is.*].

HOMILETICS.

THE WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE.—Verses 16-20.

I. Judah's helpless condition. City surrounded. Sen. determined. Egypt driven back. The crisis real. Sen.'s boast true. Resistance desperate and chances of escape hopeless. To all human appearance fate of city and inhabitants sealed. **II. The concerted prayer.** The prophet and the king bending together in prayer! In estimation of the world this a sign of weakness, the refuge of cowardice. But confidence not misplaced in this critical period. United, concerted prayer secures deliverance. "If two of you shall agree, &c." (Mt. xviii. 19). Illus. from O. T. history, life of Luther, and history of Christian Church. **III. God's signal interposition.** "Man's extremity" became "God's opportunity." In a single night miraculous deliverance came—the night in which Isaiah's predictions came to pass. "The rumour was heard" which compelled Sen.'s hasty retreat. Whether the stroke which fell upon the Assyrian army was due to natural causes (Herodotus) or supernatural interposition it was a fact, "a coincidence which no political forecast could have anticipated, no estimate of probabilities calculated." "At eventide, behold terror! before morning it is not." **IV. The marvellous effect of this interposition.** "Remember that it had been foretold by Jehovah's word, and achieved, despite all human probability, by Jehovah's own arm, we shall understand the enormous spiritual impression which it left upon Israel. 1. The religion of the one supreme God, supreme in might, because supreme in righteousness, received a most emphatic historical vindication, a signal and

glorious triumph. No other god for the present had **any** chance in Judah. Idolatry discredited, not by the political victory of a faction, nor by the destructive genius of a nation, but by an evident act of Providence to which no human aid had been contributory. It was nothing less than the baptism of Israel in spiritual religion, the grace of which was never wholly undone" [*Smith's Is.*]. 2. Hez. was honoured before nations (ver. 23). "From surrounding nations tribute poured in as to an awful avenger" [*Stanley*]. Precious things laid in abundance at the feet of Judah's king, who was magnified as the favourite and special care of Heaven. God's help will turn enemies into friends and gain for us honour and influence. 3. But the effect not confined to the times and country of Hezekiah. The Egyptian general, Tirhakah, advancing from the south, as well as Hez. in Jerusalem, heard the results with joy. Three centuries afterwards, the Psalmist's exulting language (Ps. lxxvi.) was repeated by Egyptian priests. The Maccabees were sustained by the recollection of Sen.'s fall in their struggle against Antiochus (1 Macc. vii. 41), and in the churches of Moscow the exultation over the event is still read on the anniversary of the retreat of the French from Russia (cf. *Stanley, Jew. Ch.*, vol. ii.). "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.—Verses 24 and 25.

The illness and miraculous recovery, the fall and repentance of Hezekiah, given very briefly here, more fully in 2 Ki. xx. Learn—I. **The great contrasts in the events of life.** In the palace a sick man, a dying king. By his side quietly stood the faithful prophet who had delivered the prophetic message, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live." In the public crisis, there had been excitement, intense anxiety, and great joy at deliverance. The question *personal*, "thine house," not national. *Hezekiah* needs protection as well as his *kingdom* from God. An air of deep solemnity in the sick-bed of Hezekiah striking and peculiar. "No sickness in Jewish annals so pathetically recorded," says Stanley. II. **The suddenness with which these events happen.** At one time in the midst of victory and joy, at another "at the gates of the grave." Now in the sanctuary with head "lifted up above his enemies round about," then laid prostrate and the angel of death ready to cut him down! "Man knoweth not his time" of success or failure, of life or death. "As fishes taken in an evil net, and birds caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them" (Ecc. ix. 12). III. **The distress with which they are often attended.** In the sickness of Asa, Jehoram, and Uzziah we see divine visitations, in that of Hezekiah national calamity. 1. *It was distressing.* Grieved to part with life because promise of a long and prosperous one would not be fulfilled if cut off. He spoke of upright deeds faithfully done as conditions to promise made to David. He wept at having no children to succeed him. The dark and silent world close at hand, in which he would no longer see and praise God. His thread of life about to be severed; from morning to night and from night to morning he wasted away. 2. *It was hopeless.* The cry of a dying lion, the plaintive murmur of a wounded doe, only sounds heard in sick-chamber. There seemed no hope whatever of recovery, "Thou shalt die and not live." IV. **The wonderful deliverance which God can grant.** The disease, of a mortal kind and malignant character, would prove fatal unless the healing power of God should interpose. 1. *Deliverance given through prayer.* Not like Ahab, Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, "turned his face to the wall" (2 Ki. xx. 3), to conceal fervency of devotion from attendants, looking in direction of temple, or in solemn meditation. The prayer of this righteous man availed much. "Afore Isaiah was gone out into the

middle court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, . . . I have heard thy prayer, seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee." &c. (2 Ki. xx. 4-7). A cluster of figs, an Eastern remedy, applied to the king's tumour and instant relief ensued. 2. *Deliverance with miraculous signs.* Recovery so unlooked for that Hezekiah, like Ahaz, asked for some token to confirm belief in the prophet's word. Sign specified granted to him. Shadow of the sun went back upon the dial of Ahaz ten degrees. Fifteen years were added to his life. In three days he appeared in the temple, and "the almost funeral dirge of his sick-chamber was then blended with the praise of triumphant thanksgiving with which he returns to the living world of joyous human voices and sounding music, rejoicing in the Living Source of all life, and looking forward to the hope of transmitting the truth to children yet unborn" [*Stanley*].

HEZEKIAH'S TEST AND FAILURE.—Verses 25, 26 and 31.

Soon after Hezekiah's recovery an embassy from Babylon sent to Jerusalem, to ascertain the internal resources of the country, to inquire as sages into the astronomical wonder with which Hezekiah's restoration was connected, to form an alliance with him, or to join in general homage of surrounding nations. Whatever the object of the visit, it was famous in the city and a moral test to the king. **I. Hezekiah's sins.** "His heart was lifted up" in vanity and ingratitude. 1. *By vain display of his treasures.* Flattered by the honour, Hezekiah showed the ambassadors his precious things, regalia, hereditary treasures belonging to the crown; his armoury and warlike stores; and "there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." 2. *By motives of worldly policy.* All this display evidently that the deputies might be more induced to prize his friendship and treat him as an ally on equal terms. 3. *By utter forgetfulness of God.* "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done to him." Not a word said for God who had so signally blessed him to foreigners. All about his own house and kingdom. God displeased, his will opposed to all coquetting with foreign powers; the prophet predicts a darker prospect. Those treasures carefully accumulated would become the prey of a new power. Babylon had solicited friendship and would end by enforcing slavery. We can never *pay* our debt, but should ever *acknowledge* it. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" **II. Hezekiah's humiliation.** "Hezekiah humbled himself." Isaiah's searching questions and awful predictions not without effect. King and city mourned as guilty together. Respite was granted and divine judgment not executed during his lifetime. "So that the wrath of the Lord come not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."

TESTS OF MORAL CHARACTER.—Verse 31.

God looks more narrowly into our ways than the world or the church—will purify us and fit for service by trial—never rests satisfied with a well-ordered *kingdom*, or well-ordered *house*, but seeks to set up a loftier standard in a well-ordered *heart* and upright life. **I. Moral tests in their means.** Wealth and worldly prosperity; domestic happiness and numerous offspring; sickness, popularity; great victories and heavy afflictions; suspension of grace and withdrawal of comfort. Tests applied to Abraham, Job, and Peter. **II. Moral tests in their design.** "To try him that he might know all that was in his heart." "Lord, show me myself," was the prayer of one. Satan tempts to sin; God tries men to make them conscious of real self: to discover qualities of heart and character. Self-knowledge often partial, part not *all* known; always needful and always difficult to attain; only acquired in the school of God, by peculiar discipline. "God left him." **III. Moral**

tests in their results. Sometimes virtues and worth confirmed and purified; failure in Hezekiah's case. From which learn—1. *The insufficiency of man.* Hezekiah more than mortal if he could stand. Highly commended, much to encourage and rejoice in past deeds; aided by clear teaching of prophet, yet fell from simplicity of faith. When left of God the strongest falls. 2. *The need of divine interposition.* This failure the proof that the blessings which were to come to all nations could not be realised through any king, priest, or prophet, not even through the dispensation itself. Not by progressive amelioration under Mosaic law. Tendencies in man's soul which could not be thus eradicated; increasing sin, signal failures pressing on the world which could not be removed. In Judæa and in Gentile nations "all flesh grass," fading away beneath "the burning heat" (Jas. i. 11) of divine justice. 3. *The glory of God's mercy.* A "righteous servant shall justify many." God's displeasure removed in Christ. A higher order of things introduced, and God magnified for his abundant goodness!

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 20. Hez.'s prayer in 2 Kings xix. 15-19; but no distinct mention of Is. Hez. asked him to pray (ver. 4). In affliction personal prayer needed. Good to get others to join. Two better than one. Isaiah here performs the function of minister, sick visitor, and physician. *Signs* given to Hez. *In life* God accounted him righteous, and gave him (a) a good conscience, (b) success in work, best proofs of divine favour. *In sickness* a special sign in answer to prayer, and in which Hez. read a moral lesson.

Vers. 27-31. *Hez.'s wealth.* 1. How

he secured it. 2. What he did with it. 3. What influence it had upon him. "In all time of our wealth, good Lord deliver us."

Vers. 32, 33. *Hez.'s death and burial.* 1. His death appointed. Though life prolonged, yet its length decreed. None exempt. Death ends joys, sorrows, and probation. Preparation the solemn duty of all. 2. His burial a national honour. Funeral marked with unusual respect. Royal tribe of Judah and whole population of Jerusalem present, and a marked epoch in royal interments.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXXII.

Vers. 1, 2. *War.* We possess in duplicate, on the Taylor cylinder, found at Nineveh in 1830, and now in the British Museum, and on the Bull-inscription of Kouyunjik, Sennacherib's own account of the stages of his campaign [*Driver's Is.*].

Vers. 6-8. *Courageous.* Leonidas, at the Straits of Thermopylæ, was not afraid with 400 men to oppose Xerxes, the invader of Greece, at the head of a million. William Tell, with a handful of adherents, boldly resisted the Austrian multitude and repulsed it.

"Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful."

Ver. 10. *Trust.* The practice of

Egypt was to pretend friendship, to hold out hopes of support, and then to fail in time of need [*Speak. Com.*].

Ver. 18. *Jews' speech.* Hez.'s representatives desire Rab. to speak in Aramaic, the language of commerce, and probably of diplomacy in the East. But his aim is to produce an impression upon the multitude, and he insists on using Hebrew. His speech breathes the spirit which pervades all the representations of Assyrian power.

Ver. 21. *Cut off.* The deliverance was complete and final. The Assyrian king at once returned, and, according to Jewish tradition, wrecked his vengeance on the Israelite exiles whom he found in Mesopotamia (Tobit i. 18).

He was the last of the great Assyrian conquerors. No Assyrian host again ever crossed Jordan. Within a few years from that time the Assyrian power suddenly vanished from the earth [*Stanley*].

Ver. 25. *Rendered not*. Ingratitude is an insensibility of kindness received

without any endeavour to acknowledge or repay it. It is too base to return a kindness and too proud to regard it [*South*].

“A grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged” [*Milton*].

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter is parallel with 2 Ki. xxi., yet differs in omitting some things and adding new matter, especially in central part. Impiety of Man. (vers. 1-10); his captivity and repentance (vers. 11-17; his end (vers. 18-20). Amon (vers. 21-25).

Vers. 1-10.—*Manasseh's revival of idolatry*. Named after a tribe of Israel, born after his father's recovery. *Evil*, through influence of those around him. Ver. 3. *Built* (2 Ki. xviii. 4); *groves*, one in 2 Ki. xxi. 3-7, that which was intruded into the temple. Ver. 4. *House*, i.e., within precincts of temple and in its courts (ver. 5). Ver. 6. *Through fire*, like Ahaz (xxviii. 3); *observed*, bewitched with an evil eye; *enchancements*, serpent charms; accustomed to all the black arts of the day. Ver. 7. *Carred*, in Ki. wooden stock of Ashtoreth. Ver. 8. *Appointed*, fixed. Ver. 9. *Err*, by example and conduct. Ver. 10. *Spake*, full account 2 Ki. xxi. 10-15.

Vers. 11-17.—*Manasseh's cap. and repentance*. *Thorns*, among which he hid himself for refuge (1 Sam. xiii. 6); some “among the living,” i.e., took him alive; others “which took M. cap. with rings.” Ver. 12. *Besought*, lit. “stroked or smoothed the face of the Lord” (cf. Ex. xxxii. 11; 1 Sam. xiii. 11; 1 Ki. xiii. 6; Dan. ix. 13). Ver. 14. *Wall*, rebuilt or repaired. *Gihon*, xxxii. 4; *fishgate*, near N.E. corner of lower city; went round to Ophel. Ver. 15. *Strange* (vers. 3-5); *idol* of ver. 7. Ver. 16. *Repaired*, desecrated, or damaged altar. Ver. 17. *High places* (xxxii. 1), prohibited that there might be one national altar.

Vers. 18-20.—*Manasseh's end*. *Prayer*, preserved in some MSS. of Sept., no claim to be considered the genuine utterance of Jewish king. The composition of an Hellenistic Jew, well acquainted with the Sept., writing at a time probably not much anterior to the Christian Era [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 19. *Seers*, of Hozai (margin), a prophet of the time. Ver. 20. *House*, fuller in 2 Ki. xxi. 18. Reason not known.

Vers. 21-25.—*Amon's reign and end*. A. re-established the idolatries which his father put aside; met the fate of Joash and Amaziah from his servants, at whose death executive government was suspended.

HOMILETICS.

MANASSEH'S WICKEDNESS.—Verses 1-9.

Hezekiah's reformation not completed by successors, lost its influence upon manners of people. Corruption and vice increased and openly practised by degenerate leaders. Young king trained up in idolatry and introduced abominations when he became ruler. **I. Wickedness determined in its spirit.** “He wrought much wickedness.” A liberal patron and zealous adept in Chaldean arts and imposture. Multiplied sins privately and publicly. Determined, energetic, and violent in his career. Did wickedness “with both hands earnestly.” **II. Wickedness awful in its extent.** Upset his father's reforms, increased idolatrous customs, raised soothsayers to dignity in his court, filled the land with altars of Baal, and outraged all decency

by putting an image of Asherah in the very precincts of the temple dedicated to the true worship of God. **III. Wickedness exceptional in its nature.** He practised sorcery and necromancy, and restored the fires of Tophet. "He made Judah do worse than the heathen." He became a cruel persecutor, and his reign a reign of terror. Streets of Jerusalem ran with innocent blood. "His name became in Jewish annals the synonym of infamy" (*cf.* 2 Ki. xxi. 16). Sins terrible in themselves, inexcusable in Manasseh, and most fruitful of evil! **IV. Wickedness unchecked by Divine warnings.** "The Lord spake to M. and to his people, but they would not hearken" (ver. 10). God about to destroy, not build and defend the city! "Line and plummet" threatened. Destruction would be entire and unhindered by any destroying angel. People taken away as "a prey and a spoil." M. himself a captive in chains and carried to Babylon. A punishment deserved, sent in mercy, and brought repentance and restoration.

MANASSEH'S REPENTANCE.—Verses 10–13.

Exact time of Manasseh's confinement in dungeon of Babylon not known, but narrative one of deepest interest, one which reveals the glory of unparalleled mercy. "The hardships, the loneliness, the disgrace of captivity were good for M." **I. An exception in youthful experience.** "The remarkable distinction of his career is that he is the only case clearly recorded in the Scriptures of a youth breaking away from the restraints and example of a religious parentage, who was recovered by the grace of God, and brought to repentance" [*A. Phelps, D.D.*]. **II. It was sincere in its character.** The misery and solitude of prison led to calm reflection. 1. *His humility was great.* The iron entered his soul. He recalled the days of childhood, thought of scenes of blood and cries of the murdered. The stars of heaven, which he had sinfully worshipped, shone in the dark prison to remind him of his guilt. He saw the vileness of his actions and the evil of his heart. "He humbled himself greatly." 2. *His prayer was earnest.* He humbly besought God for pardon; implored for opportunity to evince the sincerity of his sorrow. God heard, and restored him; "was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom." **III. It was permanent in its results.** On his return he exerted himself to the uttermost to correct errors of his reign, and establish the worship of God in former purity and splendour. 1. *He was concerned for the temporal welfare of the kingdom.* Repaired the old walls of the city, added a new one; surrounded and fortified the hill of Ophel; strengthened, garrisoned, and provisioned "the fenced cities of Judah." 2. *He endeavoured to practise and promote religion among the people.* In remembrance of former evils, among multitudes who had been former associates, and perhaps amid scoffs and taunts of ignominious capture and disgraceful imprisonment, he purged the land and the temple from idolatry; repaired the altar of Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings upon it, and "commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel." **IV. It is most encouraging to others.** A wonderful display of God's mercy. A proof "that the Divine mercy," says Stanley, "far exceeds the Divine vengeance, and that even from the darkest reprobation the free will of man and the grace of God may achieve a deliverance. If Manasseh could be restored, there was no one against whom the door of repentance and restitution was finally closed."

MANASSEH'S LIFE AND ITS LESSONS.

I. That the sins of parents arrested in one generation may appear in another. As diseases pass over some, and reappear in others,

so wickedness, thought to be extinct, assumes its virulence, and brings forth its fruit. **II. That when children of godly parents sin they often become worse than others.** M. went further, and more guilty of excess, than heathens around him. "M. seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." **III. That God exercises providential checks to prevent these sins.** Thus far men can only go. The end often distant, but certain, when God designs to restore. 1. To fulfil his covenant. 2. To illustrate his mercy. Paul obtained mercy as a pattern to others, a form sketch to imitate, to be filled up by others (1 Tim. i. 16). 3. To reveal his nature. "Then M. knew that the Lord he was God." **IV. That in the conversion of M. we have encouragement to labour and pray for the salvation of sinners.** Give none up in despair. God's power omnipotent, and his grace sufficient. Augustine, Newton, Bunyan, &c. This should be the theme of preaching as it is the doctrine of Scripture. After teaching theology for forty years, the elder Alexander said: "The longer I live, the more I incline to sum up my theology in the single sentence, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'"

HEZEKIAH AND MANASSEH: A CONTRAST.

We have in end of one and beginning of the other a magnificent sunset and a sunrise of quite an opposite description. A good father and king closing life in Hezekiah; a bad son and successor commencing life in Manasseh. I. Consider Hez. and what we learn about him. 1. That genuine goodness shall not want appropriate record and remembrance. 2. God the inspirer of goodness in the hearts of men will not forget it. 3. The beneficiaries of goodness will not be unmindful of their benefactors. 4. Sympathetic imitators will mirror forth their goodness from whom they have derived its idea and impulse. II. Now turn to Man and what the history says about him. 1. A youthful king. 2. A long reign. 3. A life of great wickedness. Application: 1. What may parents learn from the son of such a father? Hez. hoarded up wealth for his son. Did he undervalue the moral element in him? 2. What may subjects learn from the successor of such a king? Not to trust religion to princes who may be alternately reformers and destroyers [*J. Spencer Hill*].

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF THREE KINGS.—Verses 21-25.

I. Manasseh. There is no limit to the mercy of God. Sinners chief, welcome to complete forgiveness. If only great saints got into heaven great sinners would lose hope. But when we see M. and men like him going in and getting welcome, there is hope for us. If we follow their steps in repentance, we shall be permitted to join their company in rest.

II. Amon. Beware of turning the riches of God's grace into a snare. As Manasseh's case is recorded in the Bible that an aged sinner desiring to turn may not be cast into despair, Amon's case, recorded beside it, that the young may not delay an hour, lest they perish for ever.

III. None will be lost or saved in consequence of anything in our parents. Amon saw his father born again when old, but the son did not inherit his father's goodness. Josiah the child of an ungodly parent, yet he became a godly child. Two lessons plainly written in the history—one to make presumptuous humble, the other to give despairing hope: (1) a converted father cannot secure the safety of an unconverted son; (2) an unconverted father cannot drag down a child in his fall if that child follows the Lord [*H. Arnot*, "Fam. Treasury"].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 1. *Reigned fifty-and-five years.*

1. For the punishment of people's sins. 2. That he might have time enough to amend his own life. 3. That in him, as afterwards in Paul, "God might show forth all longsuffering" [Trapp].

Ver. 8. *Israel fixed in God's house and in the land.* 1. Fixed by God's appointment, not their own choice or preference. 2. Fixed conditionally. "Only if they will observe, &c." 3. Ejected by violation of conditional promise.

Ver. 9. *M. seduced.* The power of example. Ahaz abandoned worship of God, but did not seduce generality of his subjects. Manasseh's influence carried the whole nation with him into idolatry. Evil examples like pestilential diseases.

Vers. 11-13. *M.'s conversion.* 1. Affliction its occasion. This designed. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." "When the rod spoke he heard it (Mic. vi. 9) who would not hear the word (v. 10). God sent him into the dungeon to repent; as he did David into the depths, and Jonah into the whale's belly to pray. Adversity hath whipt many a soul into heaven, which otherwise prosperity had coached to hell" [Trapp]. 2. Prayer its accompaniment. "He besought the Lord." "His affections, like Ben-hadad's best counsellors, sent M. with a cord about his neck, to the merciful King of Israel" [Trapp]. 3. Amendment its fruits. Complete reversal of former policy; zeal in destruction of idols, and in worship of God; public example and encouragement to others to do right. "Fruits meet for repentance."

Ver. 17. *People did sacrifice.* The force of habit. (a) To withstand good example; (b) To resist religious influences; and (c) To despise Divine warnings. Easier to corrupt than to reform men, and difficult to break

off evil customs and forsake religious superstitions.

Vers. 17, 18. *A dark day and a bright sunset.* Here is an unostentatious, un-honoured, and unepitaphed grave. We have to trace in this case a sunrise of promise, soon obscured with clouds of guilt and crime. These clouds burst in floods of penitence and sorrow. A meridian of sudden brilliancy follows. The sky clears, and the orb of a chequered life sets cloudless and serene on the hills of Judah. Standing by his grave, let us consider—I. Manasseh's sin. Look at (1) His early training. Hezekiah would well bring him up; (2) The baneful influence his creed and example had on his subjects; (3) His repeated and obdurate rejection of Divine warning. II. His conversion. His dungeon became the gate of heaven. Note here the wonderful power of sanctified affliction. III. His new life. The grand test of the reality of conversion is the regenerated being. The tree is known by its fruits. We read that when God brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom, "then M. knew that the Lord He was God" [Dr. Macduff].

Ver. 20. *Buried in house,* "in the garden of his own house" (2 Ki. xxi. 18). *The sepulchre in the garden* (cf. Jno. xix. 41).

Vers. 21-25. *Amon trespassed more and more,* lit., multiplied trespasses. 1. He began early. Early in age and in reign. Only twenty-two, only two years in Jerusalem. 2. He did much in the time. To do good much effort, time, and sacrifice required. Easy to do evil, which spreads quickly and makes a harvest in short season. "How then was Manasseh dead? In what sense was Manasseh buried? Here is an active boy who has caught his mantle, and is working with redoubled industry" [Dr. Parker]. "The evil that men do lives after them."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXXIII.

Vers. 1-7. *Did evil.* It was the misfortune of Manasseh to pass the most critical period of his life, the transition from youth to manhood, in an atmosphere so fraught with moral corruption, unfavourable to the formation of manly sentiments, holy purposes, and virtuous habits—a court, the court of a youth, himself the victim of a deadly miasma; the beams of his own glory exhaled under such influences, and the better impressions of earlier teachings were speedily erased; and he emerges into notice a worldling and an idolater, a stain upon his country's annals, for fifty years a scourge and corrupter, himself at last saved, but only "in the furnace of affliction" and "so as by fire" [*Rev. R. Hallam, D.D.*].

Vers. 11-13. *When in affliction.* Methinks I hear God say, "Take this medicine; it is exactly fitted to the case, prepared and weighed by my own hands. Adam's (*Prie. Thoughts*) sin the disease, Christ the physician, pain the medicine [*Cecil*]. By pain God drives me to prayer, teaches me

what prayer is, inclines me to pray [*Adams*].

"Prayer is a creature's strength, his very breath and being;
Prayer is the golden key that can open the wicket of mercy."

Vers. 21-24. *Did evil.* M. might repent and reform—ay, and be accepted by God; but could he undo the consequences—the effects upon others—of his life and wickedness? May as well expect to prevent the appearance of disease after having used every effort to spread infection. The father may turn to God in true sorrow, but the son he beget shall follow in his parent's course of evil and never turn from it. Oh, how fearful a thing is sin! If we put our hands to it, we know not what we do. The thought of the irrevocable, irremediable consequences of sin should help to keep us from sinning [*M. J.*].

"How many, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CRITICAL NOTES.] This and next chapter give history of Josiah, and parallel with 2 Ki. xxii. and xxiii. 1-30. Josiah's good beginning (vers. 1-7); cleanses temple (vers. 8-13); finds a copy of the law (vers. 14-17); which is read by Shaphan (vers. 18-22); Huldai's message (vers. 23-28); J. reads the law to the elders (vers. 29-33).

Vers. 1-7.—*J.'s good beginning.* Walked, declined neither to right hand nor left: honourable contrast to predecessors. Ver. 3. *Young*, fifteen or sixteen years old. Jewish youths in majority at thirteen. Ver. 4. *Images*, sun statues (marg.). xiv. 3. *Dust* (Ex. xxxii. 20). *Strewed*, as if graves guilty of crimes of inmates. *Burnt*, greatest infamy to disinter bones of idolatrous priests (cf. 2 Ki. xxiii. 13-20). Ver. 6. *Cities of Mana*. The power of Assyria now (b.c. 629-624) greatly weakened, if not completely broken. J. it is evident, asserted and maintained a claim to authority over the whole land of Is. [*Speak. Com.*]. *Mattocks*, "in their dry (desolate) places" (cf. Ps. cix. 10). Ver. 7. *He had*, king himself went in person and purified the land.

Vers. 8-13.—*Temple repaired.* Purged, first cleansed, then repaired (2 Ki. xxiii. 4). S., M., and J. sent to report progress; repair, carry on the work. Ver. 9. Money collected in temple and in all parts of Judah and Is. Ver. 10. *Workmen*, overseers or superintendents

(2 Ki. xxii. 5). Eastern people only work under overseers. Ver. 11. *Couplings*, beams to bind the house and support joists. *Floor*, to rafter chambers surrounding temple or out-buildings attached to courts. Ver. 12. *Faithfully*, skilfully and diligently. Ver. 13. *Scribes*, now designating a class, a distinct division of Levitical body.

Vers. 14-22.—*Discovery of a copy of the law.* *Found*, probably an original copy of Pentateuch. Ver. 15. *The book*, the temple copy, kept in most holy place (Deut. xxxi. 26). *Shaphan* the scribe able to read it. "If this were the very autograph of Moses or his scribe, it would not be more than 830 years old. Manuscripts exist of nearly twice this age" [*Murphy*]. Ver. 16. S. took the book to king and reported the work (2 Ki. xxii. 9). Ver. 17. *Gathered*, emptied out of a chest into a bag. Ver. 19. *Rent*, in distress of mind. Ver. 21. *Enquire*, from a prophet. Agitated feelings prompted J. to seek immediate counsel to avert curses under which his kingdom lay. *Huldah*, keeper of *wardrobe*, priestly or royal garments; *she dwelt in college*, second part or suburb of city (cf. Neh. xi. 9; Zeph. i. 10).

Vers. 23-28.—*Message of Huldah.* *Tell*, oracular response, in which justice is blended with mercy, announcing impending evil to overtake the city and its inhabitants. Very likely such places as Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.—xxxii. were read to the king. Ver. 27. *Heard*, wrath delayed and prayer of king heard on account of penitence.

Vers. 29-33.—*Public reading of the law.* King does what he can to bring people to penitence. *Elders*, representatives of the nation. *Read*, caused to be read aloud before the whole assembly. Ver. 31. *Place*, upon his pillar, covenanted with his subjects to keep commandments and walk after the Lord. Ver. 33. *Took away*. Completes purgation of the land, is followed by the people in outward reformation during his lifetime; but the special mission of Jeremiah in earlier ministry to rebuke the error and urge real change of heart and life (cf. Jer. vii. 3, 4, 21-24).

HOMILETICS.

JOSIAH, OR EARLY PIETY.—*Verses 1-13.*

What Hezekiah had accomplished was soon undone by successors, Manasseh and Amon. Manasseh brought down God's judgment for present and awful threatenings for future. Destruction not averted, but delayed. God's goodness and longsuffering displayed. Josiah mounts the throne, and even in youth shows the power of true religion, and the blessings which it gives to its possessor.

I. Displayed in seeking God in youth. "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, &c." A minor till thirteen years old, he sought God, in three years after he attained majority. Probably devout and prayerful before this. No difficulty in young persons serving God. Joseph, Samuel, David, and Timothy. Boys may evince beautiful character, and give promise of virtuous life. Beza thanked God, in his last will and testament, that he became a Christian at the age of sixteen. "Those that seek me early shall find me."

II. Displayed in the administration of his kingdom. "In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem."

1. *He purged the temple.* In the long reign of his idolatrous grandfather, and short but wicked rule of his father, the temple neglected and out of repair—dilapidated and deserted for the gods of heathenism. Concerned for God's glory and God's house—sought to make temple attractive and restore it to former beauty. 2. *He deigned the land.* Altars of Baal overturned, images broken down and turned to dust, and groves uprooted. The shrines of idols forsaken and obliterated. The land deigned and the worship of temple restored and performed with scrupulous obedience.

III. Displayed with undeviating consistency. "Declined neither to the right hand nor to the left." Not satisfied with first impressions, first convictions, and first feelings towards God, but reformed the wrong and "did that which was right." Surrounded by profligate courtiers, opposed by unprincipled men, he was earnest, decided, persevering, and consistent. "He began to seek," continued and spent a whole life in setting things right through length and breadth of his kingdom. One of the

first, he was one of the most zealous converts. Judah never had a more devoted and earnest prince.

JOSIAH THE YOUNG REFORMER.

I. Reform originated by personal agency. Personal efforts of king and priests, elders and officers of the court. Good laws, religious institutions, helpful, required and not to be ignored; but moral influence essentially personal. Good men, earnest reformers—originate good laws and good institutions—the means of revivals and extensive reforms. Luther, Whitfield, and Wesley. **II. The object of reform to restore the worship of God in the land.** Not commerce or education even—not to introduce any new religion, but revive the old, pure religion which God instituted at first. J. destroyed the evil and fostered the good; secured workmen and overseers to repair the temple in great numbers. We are addicted to idolatry, to love the creature more than the Creator; but God will have no rival, should have the chief place in our hearts and lives, in our temples and kingdoms. **III. Reform was regulated by the principles of God's Word.** Engaged in the work, he was stimulated by the discovery of the law. Henceforth he acted with greater intelligence and reverence for the book. Great reforms have always been preceded and accompanied by study of God's Word. In days of Isaiah and Ezra people brought to penitence and prayer by reading of Scrip. The Reformation prepared by the translations of Tyndale and Wycliffe. The germ of the great movement in days of Whitfield and Wesley, in the "Holy Club," a meeting of a few students and tutors to study the Greek Testament in Oxford University. Bible study and Christian activity now joined together. "Have a Bible always about you," was Wesley's injunction. Follow not what is fashionable, prevalent, and convenient, but what is right in the sight of the Lord.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK.—Verses 1'-21.

The Book of the Law found is no other than the temple copy, which was deposited beside the ark in the holy of holies (Deut. xxxi. 25, 26), and during the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon, perhaps under Ahaz, when the temple itself had been profaned by idols, and as we may infer from 2 Chr. xxxv. 3, the ark also removed from its place, was somehow lost, and was now found again during the repair of the temple [*K'ül*]. **I. The Scriptures may be lost for a season.** If not actually lost, hidden away and forgotten. The Bible lost by wilful neglect to read; by mere attention to the letter and not the spirit; by criticising and dissecting it as if the production of man; by every abuse of it, though boasting of its possession. **II. When found and rightly read, the Scriptures will quicken spiritual life.** Its discovery a complete surprise to the king, who "rent his clothes," studied the book himself, and read it to others. "It is possible that it may have been a mere rediscovery, like the revival of the Fandects at Amalfi, like the revival of the Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible at the Reformation. But, in either case, this sudden appearance of the Law amounted almost to a new revelation" [*Stanley*]. 1. *It reminded of neglected duty.* Duties of prophets, priests, and kings set forth in the volume, concerning religious and political unity, the destruction of high places and obedience to Jehovah. "All that which is written concerning us." 2. *It produced a sense of guilt.* "Our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book." Curse pronounced on apostasy pierces the king's heart; he rends garments and bows down in deep sorrow

before God. 3. *It gave insight into God's service.* "Enquire of the Lord." The enquiry revealed the moral condition of the nation and urged the necessity of reform. "There was still a higher purpose which the 'Second Law' served, a still nobler spirit in which Moses might be said to have risen again in the days of Josiah, to promulgate afresh the code of Sinai. Now, for the first time, the love of God, as the chief ground of his dealing with his people—the love towards God as the ground of their service to him—the spiritual character a free choice of that service—were urged on the nation with all the force of Divine and human authority" [*Stanley*]. 4. *It stimulated to vigorous activity.* King active before, more so after discovery. Not deterred by stern message from Huldah. Rulers of people inspired, if not with the spirit of penitence, yet with the burning zeal that destroys the monuments of idolatry and repeats the deeds of Elijah. **III. Hence, when a right sense of duty is created by reading the Scripture, a revival of religion will ensue.** Spiritual sensibility was maintained in the king's profession and elevation. In the personal life of the leaders, the religious worship of the temple and the government of the nation. Political reforms and ameliorations beneficial when a spirit of piety pervades the people, and the nation fears God. Regard to God's will the secret of prosperous churches, happy governments, and genuine revivals. As individuals, churches, and nation, how do we treat the Bible? Is it losing or keeping its hold upon our religion, our manners and customs? "Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble (with holy awe) at His word" (Is. lxvi. 5).

THE LOSS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Consider what we should lose if we were to part with the Christian Scriptures, and with all the institutions and blessings for which we are indebted to them. I. In the loss of the Bible and its fruits, we should lose the knowledge of the true God. History proves this beyond reasonable dispute. God must *speak*, or man does not find him. Mankind needs a book to keep alive in the earth the knowledge of a spiritual and personal God. II. By the loss of the Scriptures and their results from the knowledge of mankind, we should lose sooner or later our institutions of benevolence. Benevolence on a large scale, and in the form of permanent institutions, and for all classes of mankind, is a Biblical idea. III. In the loss of the Bible and its fruits, we should sooner or later suffer the loss of our institutions for popular education. Culture has existed without a revelation from heaven. Schools are not the product of the Bible only. But it is beyond question that popular education is of Bible origin. Other than Christian religions build themselves on the ignorance of the masses. IV. By the loss of the Scriptures and their creations, we should sooner or later part with our institutions of civil liberty. History shows that the great charter of freedom in the world is the Word of God. The great free nations of the earth are the great Christian nations [*A. Phelps*, O. T. a Living Book].

EARLY PIETY AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

I. Enlightened piety consists in seeking God. J. "while yet young began to seek after God." God the object of all religion. To seek his favour, presence, glory, the end of rational and immortal beings. The essence of sin to deny, dishonour, and disobey God. 1. In seeking *earnestly*. Not enough to think, talk, and argue about God. Seek as after riches, "he that seeketh findeth." 2. In seeking *promptly*. J. delayed not. Jehovah had kept him from influence of corruption, from passing through the fire in his father's

reign; but this satisfied not, he sought higher knowledge, "began" early and promptly "to seek God." 3. In seeking *perseveringly*. In youthful inexperience, surrounded with temptations and hindered with disadvantages, he pursued "that which was right with decided steps," "declined neither to the right hand nor to the left." **II. Seeking God early will conduce to honour.** In temporal things it tends to health, reputation, and long life; in spiritual and eternal more advantageous. 1. *It keeps alive religious susceptibilities.* "His heart was tender," not only in the ardour and sensibility of youth, but in maturity of age, crowned with regal honours and surrounded by worldly pleasures. 2. *It saves from snares.* Temptations like wind, spring from every quarter. Exposed in company and in solitude, in God's house and in our own—always exposed. Business, pleasure, and companions may become a snare. But great risks in youth. Religion alone can preserve. 3. *It brings eminent usefulness in life.* Power in patience, love, courage, and action; influence over others in relations of life; safety in position. Self-willed monarchs have brought destruction on themselves and ruin on kingdoms. 4. *It prepares for happy death.* J. honoured in age and lamented in death. Virtues which led to prosperity cherished, and vices which tended to poverty escaped. Converted in early morning, his day bright, his work accomplished. Few sins to bewail at last, no remorse, no sins of youth to fill his bones with pain; his end, though mysterious, peaceful and triumphant. "Godliness profitable to all things, &c."

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 3. *The character of Josiah.* I. He began to serve God at a very early period of life. II. He proceeded in his career with extraordinary zeal and diligence. III. He was as zealous in promoting piety as in suppressing vice. IV. In all he did he adhered strictly to the Word of God [*Rev. C. Simeon*]. Learn—1. That a child may begin to serve God early. II. That a child may serve God when the world is most attractive. Moses, David, Josiah. III. That when a child begins to serve God early he will be likely to become honourable and useful. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." A lesson—1. *To the young.* Avoid the wrong and "do that which is right." 2. *To parents and guardians of youth.* Look well to rising generation. The welfare of families, churches, and the nation depends upon their training. "That of all men we meet with, nine parts out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education" [*Locke*]. *Began to seek.* "Sweet words are these!—to 'begin,' not only to begin,

but to begin 'to seek.' What suggestions of modesty, lowliness, and insignificance of effort! What determination expressed in simple patience! No violence, no demonstrativeness, nothing of ostentation, but inquiry, waiting, expectancy, a look that means I know not from what part of the heavens the Lord may come, but from some point he will presently descend, and it is for me to seek, to be prepared to receive him" [*Dr. Parker*]. The verse contains a description—I. Of our moral condition; without God. 2. Of essential principles of all religion; seeking God. 3. Of true prayer; earnest desire for God, not cold asking, formal seeking, &c. The words also describe the way to (1) eminent piety; (2) eminent consistency; (3) eminent usefulness.

Ver. 13. *Scribes.* Hitherto designation of a class, officers of state, who mustered troops and managed finances (*cf.* 2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25; 2 Ki. xii. 10; Is. xxxiii. 18). Here evidently a new state of things—an order of scribes forming a distinct division of Levitical body. The class term first found in

this passage, yet probably originated in reign of Hezekiah, who employed men to "copy out" uncollected proverbs of Solomon (Prov. xxv. 1). Probably to the rise of this class are we indebted for preservation of many prophecies belonging to Hezekiah's time, while works of previous prophets—of Ahijah, Iddo, Shemaiah, Jehu son of Hanani, and others—have perished [*Speak Com.*].

Ver. 14. *Found a Book.* 1. The profound sensation created. 2. The intense anxiety to know the truth. The inquiry, personal reading, and public exposition. 3. The need of the Book now. To preserve religion, educate the race, and advance the cause of God and humanity.

Vers. 23-28. *The faithful message.* Notice—1. The estimate of the king. "Tell the *man*." Only a man, sinful and mortal like other men. Kings need to be told this truth. "I acknowledge myself a mortal," said Charles V. Emperor. With God no respect of persons. 2. The threatened judgment. "I will bring evil upon this place." No hiding, no toning down of unpleasant truths. 3. The procuring cause of judgment. "They have forsaken me." Announcement to Manasseh repeated with terrible significance to Josiah. Repentance will not avail, now too late to save guilty people. "Wrath poured out and shall not be quenched."

Vers. 26-28. *A tender spirit.* Huldah in first outburst of prophetic spirit thinks only of the matter in hand, forgetting the person of the inquirer; but when that is past, and the stream flows more smoothly, the thought of the person occurs to her, "the King of Judah" [*Speak Com.*]. Here she giveth him his just title, whom before she had called "man." Piety is no enemy to civility [*Trapp*]. I. Give a general account of a tender heart. 1. It implies a quick and ready sense of feeling in spiritual things—quickness of appre-

hension, ready reflections of conscience; a disposition to be easily affected. 2. A pliable disposition to yield to Divine influences. II. The way in which such a temper should express itself. 1. In relation to the Word of God. 2. In relation to sin. 3. In relation to providential events. 4. In relation to the honour of God. III. What foundation is laid for such a temper in Christianity. 1. Good men in the ancient church were not strangers to it. 2. The recompenses of the life to come are more fully revealed. 3. Richer discoveries of grace are made to us. 4. Ceremonials have given way to substantial of religion. 5. The softening spirit is more plentifully communicated. IV. Inferences. 1. Discern the difference between a truly Christian temper and some things mistaken for it: it is not natural easiness of disposition, not occasional tenderness. 2. Let us all seek after and cultivate this tenderness of spirit. 3. If conscious of its possession, take the comfort of it as good evidence of a renewed and Christian state [*Dr. Evans*].

Vers. 29-33. I. The public reading of the Book. The Book exists; not to be invented; only to be found, used, understood, and obeyed. II. The making of the solemn covenant. Made with sincerity, "with all his heart and with all his soul;" made "to perform" in Kings (xxiii. 2), "to stand to the covenant." Many forget and fall away. III. The impression created upon the people. The example of the king, reforms in the temple and solemn resolution in open covenant. A restraint for a season. No open idolatry, no grove, nor Baal worship, yet superficial, not deeply seated amendment. Did not stand for personal purity and loyal obedience. The mission of Jeremiah in his early ministry to rebuke and urge a real change. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees."

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXXIV.

Vers. 1-7. *Eight years old.* There is at the top of the Queen's staircase in Windsor Castle a statue from the studio of Baron Triqueti, of Edward VI. marking with his sceptre a passage in the Bible, which he holds in his left hand, and upon which he earnestly looks. The passage is concerning Josiah. "J. was eight years old when he began to reign . . . and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." The statue was erected by the will of the late prince, who intended it to convey to his son the Divine principles by which the future governor of England should mould his life and reign on the throne of Great Britain [*T. Hughes*].

Vers. 8+13. *Men did work faithfully* (ver. 12). What we are accustomed to decri as great social evils will, for the most part, be found to be but the outgrowth of man's own perverted life; and though we may endeavour to cut down and extirpate them by means of law, they will only spring up again with fresh luxuriance in some other form, unless the conditions of personal life and character are radically improved. If this view be correct, then it follows that the highest patriotism and philanthropy consist, not so much in altering laws and modifying institutions, as in helping and stimulating men to elevate and improve themselves by their own free and independent individual action [*Smiles*]. We put too much faith in systems and look too little to men [*B. Disraeli*].

Vers. 14-22. *The Bible the Saviour of the Church.* Men say that the Church has saved the Bible. I say that the Bible has saved the Church tentious and times over. You shall find that when great questions come up in a community churches do not go ahead. You cannot

make them. Churches are like the baggage-waggons of an army. They carry the provisions and indispensable things; but, after all, baggage-waggons never go first in a march. And the Church is so busy taking care of the things which it carries that it has no time to devote to new things that present themselves. Reforms hardly ever originate in churches. I am not speaking against churches, I am merely putting them where they put themselves, and saying that tendencies to unusual conduct in the application of gospel principles to new questions are oftentimes ridiculed by ministers, rejected from pulpits, and refused places in conference meetings, and stigmatised by church members as being fanatical [*H. W. Beecher*]. When we find the book of the law, let us not shrink from finding its judgments as well as its gospels. The prophecies must all be fulfilled, when they indicate that the wicked shall be destroyed (ver. 25), shall be driven away in the wrath of God. The Bible is not all gospel; or where it is all gospel it involves the element of judgment and the certainty of doom [*Dr. J. Parker*].

Ver. 33. *Departed not.* The multitude "go at all adventures" (Lev. xxvi. 21, marg.), careless of their ways, reckless of their end. It is with them scarcely worth looking into—whether God is displeased or not; whether they be walking in the narrow or broad path, and what the end of that path may be. Sometimes they come into the world fresh from the influence of a religious education. For a while they yield alternately to their conscience and their corruptions. They are touched a moment under the convictions of the word, or the corrections of the rod. Yet the want of steadiness and consistency soon sweeps all away into "worse" hardness than before [*C. Bridge*].

CHAPTER XXXV.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] The preparations for the Passover (vers. 1-9); the actual celebration (vers. 10-19); Josiah's defeat by Necho (vers. 20-27). 2 Ki. xxiii. 21-30 corresponds to this chap.

Vers. 1-9.—*The preparation.* Day not irregular, but time appointed (Ex. xii. 6). *Priests* re-established in their courses and duties, as prescribed (cf. ch. xxix. 5; xxx. 16). Ver. 3. *Taught*, instructed people in matters pertaining to worship. *Put*, for some reason removed during repairs. *Burden*, ark once in its place, to remain; not to be carried about, as customary before Temple built. Ver. 4. *Prepare*, other duties devolved upon them; they must attend with diligence to regulations of public service (cf. 1 Chr. xxiii.-xxvi.). Ver. 5. A section of Levites to attend to every division of families of people. Ver. 6. *So*, particular direction required. Personal purity required that brethren may be prepared. Vers. 7-9. King and princes give animals. *J. gave* (ch. xxx. 24) lambs and kids for the meal; bullocks for burnt-offerings (Num. xxviii. 19) and thank-offerings. Ver. 8. *Willingly*, number not given, unless included in next verses. *Unto priests*, for poor families of their own order; leading priests furnished offerings; chief Levites also gave to poor Levitical families.

Vers. 10-19.—*The celebration of Passover.* *So*, everything ready, according to law. Ver. 11. *Sprinkled* (cf. xxx. 16). *Played*, removed skins. Priests and Levites performed their parts. Ver. 12. *Removed*, parts to be consumed on the altar, viz., fat, kidneys, &c.; parts cut off by Levites and given to offerers for burnt-offerings. Ver. 13. *Roasted* (Ex. xii. 8, 9), peace-offerings boiled and eaten on days of unleavened bread. Ver. 14. *Therefore*, because priests too much engaged to prepare food for themselves. Ver. 15. *Singers* divided like other Levites, divided into courses, took service in turn; the order determined by lot, first lot to sons of Asaph (1 Chr. xxv. 8-31). "Probably this course retained its presidency over the rest, and now commenced in the Temple the restored choral service" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 16. *Same day*, at that time. Ver. 17. *Seven days*, Israel, i.e., the whole people (cf. ver. 3 and ver. 18). Hezekiah's kept fourteen days (xxx. 26). Ver. 18. *Like*, for exact conformity to Mosaic law and legal purity. Ver. 19. *Year*, culminating point in reforms (2 Ki. xxii. 3).

Vers. 20-27.—*The defeat of Josiah.* After, thirteen years after, B.C. 608. A blank in Jewish history. *Necho*, son of Psammetichus, king of Egypt, against Babylonian forces which he expected to find near Charchemish, chief city of Northern Syria. N. did not wish to embarrass Josiah. Ver. 21. *House*, with which at war and against which he was commissioned by God. Ver. 22. *J. disguised*; some, *equipped himself*; others, was eager; Sept., strengthened himself to fight. *Meg.*, between Magdol and Hadadrimmon. Ver. 23. Shot by an arrow, J. ordered his servants to carry him away; put in a second chariot, reserved for flight probably, lighter than a war-chariot, and taken to Jer. Ver. 25. His death lamented by Jeremiah in words no longer extant, but preserved and chanted by professional singers long after the event. "Some find the prophet's elegy in the entire Book of Lamentations; others in a part of it (ch. iv.); most critics of opinion that the lament is lost" [*Speak. Com.*]. Ver. 25. *Ordinance*, not minstrels, but those in authority. A certain day set apart, a standing custom to lament. Ver. 26. *Goodness*, good deeds, religious faithfulness, acts of kindness or goodwill, according to that law which he found, read, and remembered.

HOMILETICS.

A CELEBRATED PASSOVER.—Verses 1-19.

Great events and remarkable days—"red letter days"—relieve monotony of life; stand out prominently in history and create epochs in memory. Such times afford comfort, inspiration, and never forgotten. No such passover as this. Notice—**I. The devout preparation for its celebration.** "So the service was prepared." King exhorted and stimulated the indifferent

and unwilling. 1. *By rightly fixing the ark.* Put away by idolatrous Manasseh, who set a carved image in its place; or temporarily removed by Josiah during repairs; it was replaced in temple, not carried about any longer. Now the priests were discharged from this burden, they must be careful for other duties.

2. *By personal sanctification.* "Sanctify yourselves" by separation from uncleanness and consecration to God. But not to end here, "prepare their brethren," by instruction, exhortation, and example. Self first, others after.

3. *By orderly arrangement of classes.* "He set them in their charge." Not any new work nor novel method; just a return to written divine order. The written word the rule to which magistrates and ministers should appeal. "Walk by the same rule." **II. The unlimited numbers which attended.** "Neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." "If we allow thirteen persons for each lamb or kid, there were upwards of 500,000 communicants, while so far as we know, there were only 17,000 sheep presented by Hezekiah and his princes (xxx. 24), which would not supply more than half the number of partakers" [*Murphy*]. **III. The earnest spirit by which it was characterised.** Remarkable for enthusiasm, holy excitement, and unity of heart. 1. *A spirit of unbounded liberality.* Multitudes reduced to poverty, especially from Israel by Assyrian devastations; unprovided with means of commemerations. The king gave to the people lambs, kids, and bullocks (ver. 7). Princes gave to priests and Levites; and chiefs of these officers remembered poor families of their order. Hearts touched, a spirit of brotherhood prevailed and all "gave willingly." 2. *A spirit of thorough consecration.* "The priests stood" waiting "in their place," the singers in their station, all "busied in offering that they might not leave their place" (ver. 15). None left their posts unless relieved by brethren, and then return to duty with delight. 3. *A spirit of hearty co-operation.* They urged and helped one another, did their work "speedily." Places not long empty, viands lost not heat nor flavour through delay. "The service of the Lord was prepared the same day" (ver. 16). **IV. The loyal obedience by which it was observed.** In accordance with law in time, method, and spirit. 1. *Right time observed.* Day appointed by law (*cf.* ch. xxx. 2, 13), "fourteenth day of the month" (Ex. xii. 6). Nothing must be done untimely. 2. *Personal purity observed.* Priests and people sanctified. "So the service was prepared." Need for cleansing with more than sprinkling of blood and water with hyssop—withdrawal from more than earthly pollution. God's service pure and loving, "sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 7), like God who is holy (1 Pet. i. 13) and light and love. 3. *Legal authority observed.* Not according to the will of the king, the conjecture of the court, but "according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses" (ver. 6), "the writing of David and the writing of Solomon" (ver. 5). "As many as walk according to this rule (lit. straight line, *e.g.* of a mason's rule or a surveyor's chain), peace be on them and mercy upon the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16).

THE DISTURBED REIGN.—Verses 20–25.

If Josiah thought that after restoration of divine worship and revival of religion he would have a period of settled peace and national prosperity, he was disappointed. The bright interval brief. "Too late is written on the pages even which describe this momentary revival," says Stanley (*Jew. Ch.*, vol. ii.), from whom we condense this outline. "It did not reach the deeply-seated, widespread corruption which tainted rich and poor alike. Large as is the space

occupied by it in the historical books, by the contemporary prophets it is never mentioned at all." The kingdom doomed, though day delayed; two calamities the immediate precursors. **I. The invasion of the Scythians** (B.C. 634-639). "The earliest recorded movement of Northern populations, hid behind the long mountain barrier, reared by nature between civilised and uncivilised races of old world. Suddenly appeared those strange, uncouth, fur-clad forms, hardly to be distinguished from their horses and waggons, fierce as their own wolves or bears, sweeping towards the southern regions which seemed to them their natural prey. No wonder that now all the ancient monarchies of the south—Assyria, Babylon, Media, Egypt, even Greece and Asia Minor—stood aghast at the spectacle of savage hordes rushing down on seats of luxury and power. About the middle of Josiah's reign one division broke into Syria, penetrated on their way to Egypt, to the southern frontier of Palestine, were bought off by Psammetichus and retired, after sacking the temple of Astarte at Ascalon. They left one permanent trace as they scoured through the plain of Esdrælon. The old Canaanitish city of Bethshan, at eastern extremity of that plain, from them received the name, which it bore throughout the Roman Empire, in the mouths of Greeks, *Scythopolis*, 'the city of the Scythians.'" **II. The invasion of Necho.** "Strengthened by influx of Northern nations, Babylon now rising into overwhelming predominance. Necho, the vigorous King of Egypt, wished to anticipate that growth by securing himself on east and north. Kingdom of Judah between these contending powers. Necho advanced through Palestine towards passes of Lebanon on his way to the great battlefield of Carchemish. In the plain of Esdrælon, the scene of so many combats in earlier history of Israel, Josiah determined, with a rashness which appeared to be against the counsels of Providence (2 Chr. xxxv. 21; 1 Esdras i. 27, 28), to stay the progress of the Egyptian army. No details given of the battle. Everything absorbed in one tragical event which closed it" [*Stanley*]. "What stability is there in earthly things? How seldom is excellency of any kind long-lived? In the very strength of his age, in the height of his strength, is Josiah withdrawn from the earth: as not without a merciful intention of His glory on God's behalf; so not without some weakness on his own. . . Sometimes both grace and wit are asleep in the wariest and holiest breasts. The best of God's saints may be sometimes miscarried by their passions to their cost" [*Bp. Hall*].

GOD'S COMMAND TO MAKE HASTE.—Verse 21.

Applying this to Christians, observe on what command founded. A distinction between moral and positive duties. Positive right because commanded; moral commanded because right, founded on the very nature of things. We may be satisfied, therefore, with God's revealed will, because sure that it is founded on rectitude. Here command to make haste founded on three principles—First, *because of the importance of the thing itself*. Not a trifle, but our life, cannot neglect without infinite loss, and plunging into lamentation and woe. If religion be anything, it is everything; the "one thing needful." Secondly, *because of the limitation of our opportunities*. We have only one season to regard these things, the world over. "No work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, &c." Several circumstances to be mentioned in regard to this season of attention. It is *short*. "What is thy life? &c." It is *uncertain*. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, &c." It *has also much* in it not applicable to *any serious and important service*. The whole of infancy, much of childhood and youth; lawful business, allowed recreation and necessary sleep. Observe also that of this only season for action, *many favourable periods may fail before the end of it*. "The harvest may be passed and the summer ended, &c." Then of

this season *much is already gone*. Only a day and sun risen very high with some. "It is high time to awake, &c." And if this applies to all, with what force to those of sixty or seventy or more? Thirdly, because of *the advantages to be derived from ardour*. Often said, and is literally true, that "the lazy take the most pains." They make no progress, because everything a diversion or hindrance; have to begin again and again. How often have we succeeded beyond expectation when we have applied ourselves with decision and vigour! A pleasure in acting with vigour which listless, inert, lounging and yawning never know. Never so happy as in application. Slothful say, "See a lion in the way, &c." But zeal clears the way of the lion, removes impediments, or turns them into auxiliaries [*Jay*, "Evenings with Jesus"].

RASHNESS AND RISKS.—Verses 20-24.

From the time of Manasseh, Judah had been a vassal of Assyria, the rival of Egypt. In this war Josiah might feel bound as a matter of honour to support the interests of his northern liege-lord and oppose Necho. Might think it perfectly legitimate to prevent the march of the enemy through his own territories—might doubt Necho's faith in "Elohim," whom, he said, gave him commission. Warning, unheeded, attack made, and results sad! **I. Josiah rash in his conduct.** May be excused in some things, but erred in others. All not good that good men do. "Great men are not always wise." 1. *Josiah's action was unwise*. Intermeddled with strife not belonging to him. "His best apology," says one, "perhaps would be that Necho was marching through a part of Judea. But then, first, this part did not belong to him; and, secondly, if Necho had passed through, he might have done so, as Israel formerly desired to pass through the borders of Moab, engaging to commit no injury, and to pay for all they used." 2. *Josiah acted from impulse and not conviction*. Passion worse than conviction, and never a wise counsellor. "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." 3. *Josiah sought not divine counsel*. Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Urijah, and a college of seers with him, but did not ask counsel of the Lord. "Shall I go up, or shall I forbear?" If we reject divine counsel, it betrays consciousness of wrong, and leads to risks in any enterprise. 4. *Josiah rejected urgent warnings*. Necho, calm and conciliatory, sent ambassadors. "What have I to do with thee? &c." But J. despised—(1) *Appeals to reason*. "I come not against thee." (2) *Appeals to religion*. "For God commanded me to make haste." (3) *Appeals to self-interest*. "Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." **II. Josiah's rash conduct brought fearful results.** "J. would not turn his face from him, &c." 1. *Upon himself*. "In his chariot, but disguised, according to the practice of the royal families of Israel (2 Chron. xxxv. 22; 1 Ki. xxii. 30) in moments of extreme emergency. The Egyptian archers, such as we see on their monuments, discharged a volley of arrows against him. He fell, was placed in his second chariot of reserve, and carried to Jerusalem to die" [*Stanley*]. A death untimely, which might have been avoided, but permitted by God, a mystery and a correction. 2. *Upon the nation*. Unworthy of such a prince, he was taken away from impending calamities. A striking illustration how "the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." God's decree took fatal effect, after delay, in Josiah's life. Jerusalem taken, and inhabitants carried to Babylon.

THE DEATH OF KING JOSIAH.—Verses 23-25.

I. The mystery of the event. A good man's end often strange. Steps taken which result in failure and death. One event, specially stamped

with uncertainty, but linked with God's purpose. "A time to die." "Who can tell a man when it shall be?" "In the day of death," the king impotent to resist as the beggar; depends upon God's will, not man's effort. Drawn by policy, alliance, or apparent duty; "so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." **II. The memorial of the event.** A mournful death, without precedent in annals of Judah. Commemorated—
 1. *In prophetic dirge.* "Jeremiah lamented," and minstrels, male and female, sang dirges of the event. 2. *In national mourning.* "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah." A contrast to the unwept fates of those who depart "without being desired" (ch. xxi. 20). 3. *In appointed ordinance.* "Made them an ordinance in Israel." The elegy of prophet, chanted at stated public occasions, long perpetuated, and the lamentation became proverbial for any great and extraordinary sorrow (Zech. xii. 11). Good men valued by their loss, honoured by those who live contrary to their teaching, and survive after death. In long continuance, in holy influence, "the memory of the just is blessed."

"Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown :
 O grant an honest fame, or grant me none" [Pope].

I. The striking feature of the story is the picture it gives of the quiet manner in which God's servants are sometimes allowed to pass away when they have finished their work. The history of Josiah's death compared with his life puts things in right order; his life active, hard-working, and zealous; death quiet, unexciting, what we call inglorious. The history fitted to check tendency to lay too much stress upon circumstances of a man's death; to be fond of exciting death-bed scenes, to delight in religious books which vividly describe last moments of departing friends. He who will stand least reprovable at last day, will be he who has worked most earnestly and vigorously in cause of holiness and of Christ when all temptations of the world and the strength of Satan have been opposed to him. II. The moral we draw from the text is that he who does his work in the proper time, who does not put off till old age the work of youth, nor the hour of death the labour of life, may be quiet and unconcerned for the way in which God may please to call him. If called by sudden providence when engaged in work, or summoned by speedy sickness, he may be of good cheer and of quiet mind, knowing that God will do all things well [*Bp. Harvey Goodwin*].

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 3. *Ark replaced.* Change of circumstances, relief of *burden*, and opportunity for more vigorous service in known duty. Pray not for a larger sphere, for more work. Do what is appointed, and fill well present sphere. *Stand in your place.*

Ver. 4. *Prepare.* Heathens saw that God was not to be served but by those who were prepared beforehand. Solon willed in his laws that the sacrifices should be chosen and selected, and the sacrificers should purify themselves some days before [*Trapp*]. Should not people long before prepare, when they come to the Lord's table? [*Ibid.*].

Ver. 15. *Singers in their place.* Song in God's house. 1. *Its nature.* Spiritual,

appropriate, and spirited. Certain Psalms cxliii.–cxviii. inclusive. Resolve, "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation." 2. *Its leaders.* Numbered, stationed, and qualified. This needful and helpful. Organist, clerk, and choir should be early in place, devout in spirit, and orderly in all things. 3. *Its design.* Not a musical performance for gratification of the people; not to display ability, culture, and efficiency in singers: but to please God (Phil. ii. 8–10), and praise Christ. Pliny found in worship of Bithynians a hymn "to Christ as God." "Sentimental twaddle, sung by a congregation, is essentially carnalising and

paganising. What sort of a nation will our 'Songs of Zion' make? Are they of Zion? Some of them have a look of Rome, and some of Raow [*Prof. J. Macgregor, D.D.*].

Ver. 21. *Haste*. Three things concerning which God "commands to make haste"—1st, To secure the salvation of the soul; 2nd, To a course of godliness; 3rd, To efforts in seeking the welfare of others [*Jay*].

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER XXXV.

Vers. 7-9. *Gave willingly*. If a wealthy man promise much and perform nothing, a poor man who is unable to undertake or perform is better than he [*Bp. Hall*]. Rich men's presents are gold and silver or other costly things. Mine must be recommended by the affectionate pleasure with which I give them [*Ven. Bede when dying*].

Ver. 16. *Prepared the same day*. Life is a short day, but it is a working day. "Oh! my Father, help me to finish my work in Thine honour" [*Livingstone's Journal*, Jan. 1st, 1871].

Ver. 21. *Haste*. These are remarkable words in the mouth of a heathen; but they are not without a parallel in the remains of ancient Egypt that have come down to us. Piankhi, for

Ver. 22. *Hearkened not*. 1. Providence asserted in Necho. Individual and supreme—"Commanded me." 2. Providence contravened in Josiah. Ignorantly in some degree, yet really opposed to divine plan. "Woe then to such as hearken not to the undoubted words of God, in the mouths of his faithful ministers."

instance, King of Egypt, about B.C. 750, says in an inscription which has been translated by the Rev. Canon Cook, "Didst thou not know that the Divine shade was over me? I have not acted without his knowledge; He commanded my acts" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 23-25. *Lamented*. While the living minister is neglected, the dying one may be lamented, and lamented the more when dead because he was neglected while living. The children of Israel were always complaining of Moses, and frequently threatening him, yet they wept for him on the Plains of Moab thirty days, and we are persuaded sincerely. Want endears and increases worth [*Jay*].

"How mercies brighten as they take their flight!" [*Young*].

CHAPTER XXXVI.

[CRITICAL NOTES.] This chapter gives the reigns of Jehoahaz (vers. 1-4), of Jehoiakim (vers. 5-8), of Jehoiachin (vers. 9, 10), and of Zedekiah (vers. 11-21); the proclamation of Cyrus (vers. 22, 23). Parallel with 2 Ki. xxiii. 31-xxv. "The chapter scarcely adds anything to our knowledge of the later history of the Jewish kingdom, but it was requisite to complete the design of the work, which aimed at tracing the fortunes of the Jewish people from the death of Saul to the return under Zerubbabel" [*Speak. Com.*].

Vers. 1-4.—*Succession of Jehoahaz*. Original name Shallum (Jer. xxii. 11); third son of Josiah (1 Chron. iii. 15); took name of Jehoahaz ("the Lord possesses") on accession. Ver. 3. Necho followed up advantage gained in Judah, deposed J. *Condemned*, fined the land, and set up Eliakim as vassal on the throne. Ver. 4. *Turned*, change of Eliakim into Jehoiakim ("God sets up," into "Jehovah sets up"), in deference to the king and people, and in keeping with politic character of Necho. *Eg.*, where he died.

Vers. 5-8.—*Jehoiakim* two years older than *Jehoahaz*, and of a different mother (2 Ki. xxiii. 31-36); *evil*, followed the course of idolatrous predecessors. Ver. 6. *Nebuchad.*, first expedition against Palestine in lifetime of his father, *Nabopolassar*, who was old and infirm, and adopted his son *Neb.* joint sovereign, dispatched him against Egyptian invaders of the empire. *Neb.* victorious at *Carchemish*, drove them from Asia, reduced provinces west of Euphrates, and *Jehoiakim* became vassal of Assyrian kingdom (2 Ki. xxiv. 1). At end of three years *J.* rebelled, but vanquished, stripped of possessions, and taken prisoner. Allowed for a short time to remain in his tributary kingdom, gave fresh offence. Jerusalem besieged, and the king slain in a sally (*cf.* 2 Ki. xxiv. 2-7; Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30).

Vers. 9, 10.—*Jehoiachin*. Eight: "As *Nebuchad.* carried away this king's wives (2 Ki. xxiv. 15), it is plain that eight here is a slip of the transcriber for eighteen, the number found in 2 Ki. xxiv. 8; and even in the Sept. *Jehoiachin* is otherwise *Jechoniah* (1 Chron. iii. 16), and even *Coniah* (Jer. xxii. 24). His reign of three months and ten days scarcely called a reign, as he merely claimed the crown until taken away by *Nebuchad.*" [*Murphy*]. Year expired, lit., "at the return of the year," in spring, when campaigns began. City captured, temple pillaged, king, nobles, and skilful artisans carried to *Babylon* (2 Ki. xxiv. 8-17).

Vers. 11-21.—*Zedekiah's reign*. Originally *Mattaniah*, appointed by *Nebuchad.*, from whom he received crown on conditions of solemn oath. Ver. 13. *Swear*, took oath of allegiance, which he broke, and was censured (Ezek. xvii. 13). Ver. 14. Further justification for God's rejection. Idolatry added to other sins. Ver. 15. *Messengers*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and others. *Betimes*, continually and carefully. Ver. 16. *No remedy*, no healing; sinned beyond mercy (2 Ki. xxiv. 4). Ver. 17. *Slew*, cut and slew; reference to God, who caused disasters to fall upon them for sins. Slaughter fearful at capture of city (*cf.* Ezek. ix. 6, 7; Lam. ii. 7-10). Ver. 20. *Vessels* enumerated (2 Ki. xxv. 14, 15). The pillage more sweeping than in days of *Jehoiakim* (2 Ki. xxv. 1-10; Jer. xxxix. 1-8). Those who escaped from sword carried into exile till accession of Persian king; *servants*, slaves to *Neb.* and his sons, employed in forced labour which great works necessitated. Ver. 21. *Word* (Jer. xxv. 11; xxix. 10). *Sabbaths* (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35). The seventy years to be counted from first taking of *Jer.* by *Neb.* in fourth year of *Jehoiakim* (605 B.C.).

Vers. 22, 23.—*Proclamation of Cyrus*. Peculiar to *Chron.* "An interval of fifty years passed over in silence" [*Murphy*]. *First year*, as sovereign of second monarchy of *Daniel* (B.C. 538). *Stirred up*, mode not mentioned; prophecy (Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1) may have been shown to him by *Daniel*, and exercised powerful influence over him. *God of heaven*, "similar formula at commencement of the great majority of Persian inscriptions" [*Speak. Com.*]. Intimates acquaintance with supreme God, not necessarily an intelligent adherent; *Cyrus* considered that he was *charged*, chosen agent to build God's house, and therefore invites his people to return. "Such is the finale of *Chronicles*. It thereby shows itself to be an introduction to the history of the returning exiles of *Judah* and *Israel*, which is contained in *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, and an exposition of the peculiar principles by which the restored people had to be governed" [*Murphy*].

HOMILETICS.

THE REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ.—Verses 1-4.

After death of *Josiah*, a deplorable period of misrule and imbecility. Unhappy sons struggled for independence, but entailed miseries of siege and capture. Kings recede into obscurity: *Jeremiah*, the prophet, the central figure around whom gather interests of a falling State. For three-and-twenty years almost alone, he endeavours to avert, delay, or mitigate the judgments, but in vain. "When he cannot give hope," says one, "or consolation, or peace, he gives his tender sympathy—is himself the sad example of exile, persecution, misery, death."

I. The method of his accession. "The people of the land made him king." Not the eldest son of *Josiah*, but popular favourite on account of his martial spirit (Ezek. xix. 3), and determined opposition to aggressive measures in *Egypt*. Anointed—a ceremony not deemed necessary in regular and undisputed succession—to impart greater validity to popular choice and render disturbance from *Necho* less likely, who, like all *Egyptians*, associated idea

of sanctity with regal anointing. "Man proposeth, but God disposeth." **II. The shortness of his reign.** "He reigned three months, and the king put him down." Necho on victorious return from the Euphrates deposed him, and deemed it expedient to have a king of his own nomination on the throne. The will of the people, the solemnity of anointing of no avail. The autocrat, good or bad, a Solomon or a Herod, is without control. (*Sic volo; sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas*), "He doeth whatsoever pleaseth him, and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" (*Ecc. viii. 3-4*). **III. The taxing of the land.** "Put the land to a tribute" (a hundred talents of silver, £3,418 15s.; and a talent of gold, £5,475; total amount of tribute, £8,893 15s.). Heb., set a mule upon the land (*2 Ki. xxiii. 33*). This a dishonour, a sign of subjection and dependence. What a fall from exalted position and former greatness! **IV. The end of his career.** The deposed king sent for to Riblah, in Syria, arrested in chains, taken prisoner, and carried into Egypt, where he died. "Something there had been in his character, or in the popular mode of his election, which endeared him to his country. A lamentation, as from his father, went up from the princes and prophets of the land for the lion's cub (*Ezek. xix. 34*), that was learning to catch his prey, caught in the pitfall, and led off in chains—by a destiny even sadder than death in battle. 'Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him, but weep sore for him who goeth away.' He was the first King of Judah who died in exile. 'He shall return no more, he shall return no more to see his native country—his native land no more' (*Jer. xxii. 10-12*)" [*Stanley*].

Jehoiakim, THE WICKED PRINCE.—*Verses 3-8.*

Jehoiakim second son of Josiah, born B.C. 634, and eighteenth king of separate throne of Judah for a period of eleven years, set up as vassal of Egyptian king.

I. The significant change of his name. Originally Eliakim (*Eli-yakim*), changed into Jehoiakim (*Jeho-Yakim*). Heathen princes gave new names to those who entered their service usually after their gods. This an Israelitish name, bestowed probably at Eliakim's own request, whom Hengstenberg supposes to have been influenced by a desire to be connected with the promise (*in 2 Sam. vii. 12*), where not *El*, God, but "*Jehorah* will set up." The change signifies loss of liberty and dependence. A striking contrast between the beauty of the name and the misery of its fate. Aspire to that "new name which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." **II. The wickedness of his conduct.** A reign filled with idolatry, oppression, and misfortunes. Sketched with masterly hand in *Jer. xxii. 13-23*, and in *Ezekiel xix. 5-9*.

- In his restoration of idolatry.* He followed the example of idolatrous predecessors, people eagerly availed themselves of vicious license of a lax government. Land filled with heathen "abominations."
- In his tyrannical measures of government.* Jeremiah reproaches him for covetousness, cruelty, injustice, violence, and luxury (*xxii. 13-17*). Bloodthirsty (*xxvi. 20-23*), selfish, and most extravagant. Indifferent to sufferings of his people, and at a time of impoverishment of land by heavy tributes to Egypt, he squandered large sums in building luxurious palaces.
- In his impious defiance of God.* From beginning of his reign the voice of Jeremiah predicts and prefigures danger by striking signs. Attempts to silence the prophet by princes, priests, and false prophets. Jehoiakim used the penknife to cut up the leaves of the Book and destroy the effect of the message, at a period of solemn fast. The counsel of God stood sure, but no impression made upon the mind of the king by the fresh roll.
- In his rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.* After three years' subjection, deluded by Egyptian party in court, he ventured to withhold tribute and throw off Chaldean yoke (*2 Ki. xxiv. 1*). Perhaps desired to spend money

in luxury and pride, not to pay the King of Babylon; perhaps sought to become independent since severance of Egypt from Syria at battle of Carchemish. But the step, contrary to earnest remonstrance of Jeremiah, in violation of oath of allegiance, and the ruin of king and country. **III. The calamities of his reign.** Scripture statements brief but graphic. 1. *The invasion of his kingdom.* Nebuchadnezzar too busy in conflict between Lydian and Median empires to march against Jerusalem and chastise his rebellious vassal, sent his governors to rouse surrounding nations, and Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites united with Chaldaean forces to harass Judah. No rest or safety out of the walled cities. At length, in seventh year of his reign (B.C. 598), Nebuchadnezzar took field in person, concentrated forces, marched first against Tyre, which had rebelled about time of Judah; then, after investment of city, went against Jerusalem. 2. *The desecration of the Temple.* "Carried the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon." A portion of sacred vessels, perhaps in lieu of tribute unpaid, and deposited in the house of Belus, his god (Dan. i. 2; v. 2). **IV. The dishonour of his end.** Though a prisoner and chained to be carried to Babylon at first, he was permitted to remain in his tributary kingdom. In siege of the city, by an engagement with the enemy, or by the hand of his own oppressed subjects, who thought to conciliate the Babylonians by the murder of their king, he came to a violent end in eleventh year of his reign. His body ignominiously treated as predicted—cast over the walls, left exposed, dragged away "with the burial of an ass beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (cf. Jer. xxii. 10 and xxxvi.). Warning lost upon J.; disregarded future with its clear and awful signs, held the throne in sufferance, until he fell into disgrace and ruin. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN: THE EXTINCTION OF THE ROYAL LINE.—Verses 11–21.

Zed. the twentieth and last king of Judah. His proper name, Mattaniah, changed to Zedekiah at accession, may be in allusion to Jeremiah's prophecy of Israel's future as *Jehovah-tsidkenu*—Jehovah, our Righteousness (xxiii. 5, 8). Rather weak than wicked, Z. requested the prophet to pray for him, but refused his advice. Rebellion brought siege to the city, destruction to the Temple, and exile to himself and Royal family. The events of his reign summed up in brief record—**I. Reckless disregard of Divine warnings.** Jeremiah a true prophet and best friend, but unheeded; treated alternately as a traitor and a madman (Joseph. Ant. x. 7, sec. 41); and at last imprisoned. Admonished, but amended not. "He humbled not himself before Jeremiah, &c." **II. Ruinous policy pursued.** Policy of Jeremiah prevailed for a while in foreign matters. An embassy sent to Babylon to take solemn oath with Nebuchadnezzar in the sacred name of Elohim, which Israel and Babylon alike acknowledged. 1. *In throwing off yoke of allegiance.* "Rebelled against N., who had made him swear by God" that he would keep the kingdom for Nebuchad., make no innovation, enter into no alliance with Egypt (Ezek. xvii. 3; Joseph. x. 7, s. 3). He acted in contravention to this oath, perjured his character, and committed the crowning act of wickedness, according to the high standard of prophetic morality. "Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord God, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die" (Ezek. xvii. 15, 16). 2. *In persisting in rebellion.* Hananiah's prophecy had been falsified, and he himself had died according to the word of Jeremiah—the folly of a mere remnant opposing a mighty nation was exposed. Egyptian help in vain, and real alliance with surrounding nations impossible.

Yet the king infatuated, held out and was ruined. **III. Incurable idolatry into which the nation had fallen.** 1. *All classes were corrupted.* "All the chief of the priests" who should have opposed idolatry, "and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen." Into the sacred precincts of the temple idolatrous rites had crept. In the outer court women wept and wailed for Tammuz (Ezek. viii. 14); in subterranean chambers incense offered by elders to creeping things and abominable beasts (*ib.* x. 11); and at the entrance to the temple building, between porch and altar, the rising sun was worshipped, by those who turned their backs to the sanctuary and their faces to the east (ver. 16). Thus "they polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem." 2. *The prophets of God were insulted.* Mocked in words, opposed openly in acts, and ill-treated in life. This affront to God who sent them, an evidence of implacable enmity and an invincible determination to persevere in sin. But those that abuse God's messengers provoke his wrath and cannot escape. 3. *The nation beyond all hope.* "The wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (ver. 16). "No healing," no physician, for a body corrupt and already dead. Sins beyond mercy, "which the Lord would not pardon" (2 Ki. xxiv. 4). Possible to sin too long, to sin away the day of grace. "They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof, therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices." **IV. The execution of Divine judgments.** The end rapidly coming. The city besieged and reduced to extremities. Fire of besiegers aided by severe famine within. Inhabitants resorted to terrible expedience (Jer. xxxviii. 9; Lam. iv. 10). At length a breach effected and Chaldeans entered. 1. *The temple burned*; 2. *The city ruined*; and 3. *The inhabitants carried to Babylon.* Sacred vessels taken, palaces of princes levelled to the ground, fortifications demolished, and predictions fulfilled to the letter. No escape by flight. Zedekiah pursued, caught, and despatched to Riblah. Nebuchadnezzar, with cruelty characteristic of the times, ordered his sons to be killed and his own eyes to be thrust out (*cf.* Jer. xxxii. 4 and Ezek. xii. 13). "The king of Babylon bound him in chains and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death." 1. Transgressors cannot escape from appointed judgments. 2. The bitterness of sin is seen in the overthrow which it creates. 3. Since we have not otherwise any guarantee against national humiliation, what need to have the Lord on our side!

"Justice, like lightning, ever should appear
To few men's ruin, but to all men's fear" [*Suenam*].

THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS.—*Verses 22, 23.*

God pitied his people in captivity. Predicted long before that he would restore them again to the land of their fathers. The promise not forgotten. "In the first year," when Cyrus gained possession of Babylon, an edict granting exiles permission to return to Jerusalem. **I. The work Cyrus was called upon to undertake.** "He hath charged me to build him an house." Jerusalem in ruins, materials and men required to rebuild. Some pull down and delight in destruction. Cyrus felt responsible for rebuilding of Temple, construction of Theocracy, and arrangements for future kingdom and welfare of God's people. The secular welfare of his government and the religious interests of his own country overlooked. Absorbed in one grand mission. Israel's disobedience to God's charge aggravated by obedience of Cyrus, a heathen king. **II. The proclamation for help in this work.** "He made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom." His dominions first confined to province of Persia, successively enlarged by addition of Media, Lydia, Asia

Minor, Babylon and Assyria, Samaria and Judea. 1. The proclamation *was inspired*. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus." Not the suggestion of Magi in the city; not the instruction of Daniel, who informed Cyrus of predictions concerning him. But "the Lord God of heaven," who influences the heart of kings like rivers of water, prompted him to fulfil this duty. 2. The proclamation *was written*. Written in Jewish language to be understood by tribes in distant provinces. Written and proclaimed aloud, "caused a voice to pass," like a jubilee trumpet to sound deliverance to captives. 3. The proclamation *was gracious*. Political considerations might prompt. Egypt a formidable rival to the great world empires. Might be advantageous to have an advanced post in south of Judea to protect against invasion, or from which to make rapid descent upon lands of the Nile. But higher aim in the emancipation of Jews and liberty to return. **III. The response to the proclamation.** Cf. Ezra i. Leaders and chief men responded heartily. God disposed many to make sacrifices and return, others remained in Babylon. 1. The response must be *immediate*. "Let him go up without delay." 2. The response must be *voluntary*. "Who is there among you of all the people?" 3. The response must be *accepted*. May involve risk, long journey and great sacrifices; but duty urges, God promises, and privileges enjoyed if we comply. The gospel preaches deliverance to the captives, but many in love with sin, prefer to stay in the world and have no portion in Jerusalem.

HOMILETIC HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 8. *Found in him*. 1. Evil latent in every heart. 2. Circumstances only required to discover and develop it.

Ver. 13. Three steps in wickedness. Broke his engagement, stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart. *Rebelleth, &c.* 1. *The sanctity of an oath*. Though taken under compulsion, and not due on natural equity: yet must be held sacred, not binding merely till exigency should pass away. 2. *The danger of infringement*. Its violation not excused, nor passed in silence; but the filling up of the cup of the nation's guilt. Contracts and oaths not mere legal forms, to be lightly esteemed, but solemn obligations. Violations more criminal than breaking promises; sins of great deliberation, signs of lax morals, and may be precursors of national ruin.

Ver. 16. *His prophets*. 1. Prophetic teaching a constant element in Israel's history. Not left in darkness like heathen nations. Crises and master minds. Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, &c. 2. The method of this teaching unique and worthy of consideration. *Divinely* taught. Each set

apart; all pre-eminently raised above their fellow-men, "the messengers of God." *Earnestly* taught. "Rising up betimes," *i.e.*, earnestly and carefully: unwearied anxiety and solicitation. *Patently* taught. "Sending them" constantly, though ill-treated and set at naught. What kindness and forbearance! 3. Rejection of this teaching brings guilt and danger. *Guilt aggravated*, "until the wrath of the Lord arose." *Escape hopeless*, "till there is no remedy." God's long-suffering and earnest entreaties by servants "rising early and protesting to them." The most awful aggravations of guilt in "refusing to hear" (cf. Jer. xi. 11).

"God sends his teachers with every age,
To every clime and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind" [Lowell].

No remedy. These words contain three facts of great importance. 1. That there was, at least at one time, a remedy. 2. That the remedy went on, and might have been used, for a very long period. 3. That there came a time when the remedy ceased. I.

All life is a remedy. The conditions of things require it. Life a great restorative process. 1. Comes that marvellous provision of God in Jesus Christ. 2. Subordinate to this great remedy of the cross of Christ, and working with it, all providences have a curative character. 3. Every one carries within himself an antidote to himself. Conscience, till silenced, a sure antidote for evil. II. Notice the word "till." It shows how slow God is to take away the remedy. His mercy holds back the arm of justice. But we may sin ourselves into a state, not in which there is no forgiveness, but no thought or desire to seek forgiveness. "No remedy," not on God's account, but your own; not in God's want of will to save you, but in your own incapacity to will your own salvation [J. Vaughan, *Sermons*].

Ver. 21. *As long.* Seventy years'

desolation predicted by Jeremiah. "The idea that the duration of the desolation was determined in the Divine counsels by the number of the neglected sabbatical years, and that the enforced fallow was intended to compensate for previous unlawful cultivation, is not found in Jeremiah, and, indeed, appears only in Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, and in this place" [*Speak. Com.*]. Learn—1. The purpose of God in the affliction of his people. 2. The providence of God in regulating affliction for good, and as regards—*a*, method; *b*, degree; *c*, time. As the exodus from Egypt came in the exact time, so return from Babylon after seventy years. Times of deliverance correspond with minute exactness to prophetic announcements. Hence patience, submission, and hope. "Even the selfsame day it came to pass" (Ex. xii. 41).

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